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The Parting Visit.

See page 18.

HETTY PORTER;

OR,

GOD KNOWS BEST.

FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS.



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HETTY PORTER.

CHAPTER I.

LEAVING HOME.

“You will let my child go to church at least once every Sabbath, and to the Sunday-school regularly!”

“O yes, certainly, Mrs. Porter. I belong to the Church myself, and of course am very particular that those in my employ should attend service. Give yourself no uneasiness on that account. As far as the moral influence of my house is concerned, I may say, it will be good. As regards the work, as I said before, it will be very light. I really don’t need another servant. I hire one only to please my housekeeper, whose services I value so highly as to be willing to do almost anything to keep her with me.”

It was with a voice in which a tone of sadness was very perceptible, though she tried to

smother it out, that Mrs. Porter said, "Well, I will talk with Hetty about it; and, yes, I am quite certain that she will be willing to go with you when you start."

"Which will be to-morrow in the eight o'clock train. I will have the carriage driven up here; and, of course, after what has been said, I shall not expect your daughter will disappoint me;" and with a little condescending bow, the lady, Mrs. Manson, took her departure.

It was a rather humble room in which this fragment of a conversation took place, yet it was a very pleasant one, with its scrupulous neatness and order. The front door stood wide open, admitting the warm sunshine of an afternoon in the early spring. A neatly swept walk led from the door to the gate, and on either side of it were long flower beds, in which the delicate plants, their winter coverings just removed, were beginning to show themselves. Beyond these, and in a row along the white fence, were many tall trees and much thick shrubbery. Altogether it was a very pretty looking place, and one would imagine that the inmates of the little white cottage might be happy. But

there was a skeleton of sorrow here, as in many another place that appears pleasant to the eye. It was drunkenness. The husband and father was a daily trial and shame to his family.

"Well," Mrs. Porter said to herself as Mrs. Manson turned away, "Well, it can't be helped now, and worse things than this might happen after all." Then she took up her sewing, which had lain in a large basket by her side, and soon her fingers were flying as swiftly as had been their custom, from morning till night, for years past.

In a few moments a strange sound of heavy tapping was heard upon the flagstones that led up to the door. Then a very delicate looking boy, supported by a couple of crutches, hobbled into the door, and sank down wearily into a large arm-chair near it.

"You look very tired, James," said Mrs. Porter; "I am afraid you have taken too long a walk to-day."

"Yes, mother, I am tired; but it was such a beautiful afternoon, and I kept thinking of old Mrs. Ray. You know the doctor says she can't live. O, mother, isn't it dreadful to die with no hope in God?"

“Yes, my child, it must be; we must pray for Mrs. Ray. God would receive her even now. But don’t talk any more, James, you are too tired;” and Mrs. Porter rose and placed a pillow behind his head, and, leaning wearily against it, he closed his eyes.

Mrs. Porter seemed to be expecting somebody, for she glanced often from her work down the road. Soon she caught the gleam of a snowy apron, and saw a blithe little figure hurrying along. A few moments later steps were again heard on the pavement; but this time they were light, free ones. It was Hetty Porter, the twin sister of James, but very different in appearance. Their features were much alike; but the brightness of Hetty’s dark eyes, her pink cheeks and red lips, contrasted painfully with the pallid expression of James’s face.

Hetty’s arms were full of books, for this was the last day of the term of school. As she came in and placed them upon the table she glanced nervously at her mother.

Mrs. Porter understood the look, and, said with a smile, “Well, Hetty, you are going to lay by your books now for a while, are you not?”

“O mother! then you have decided;” and Hetty sank down into a chair, a disappointed expression on her face.

“Yes; I have tried to do for the best; but don’t look so sorry, child, you are not going to bury your books, or if you are, you will dig them up again I hope. Mrs. Manson has been here this afternoon, and she expects you to go with her to-morrow morning.”

“What is it, mother? Hetty isn’t going away, is she?” said James, opening his eyes and looking anxiously toward his mother.

“Yes, James, I shall have to tell you now. Hetty is going to spend the summer with Mrs. Manson, the lady that has been visiting at Squire Lawton’s, you know, doing light work for her housekeeper.”

“Going out to work! O, mother, must she?” and James bowed his head on the top of one of his crutches. For a moment he was very still; then he said, in a voice which trembled with feeling, “It is too bad, too bad.”

“What is too bad?” said Mrs. Porter gently.

“Why, here I sit from morning till night, a great boy, doing nothing, only a burden, while

my sister, a *girl*, has to go out to work. I am of no use ; why—”

“ O, Jamie, don’t ! ” and Hetty was by his side in a moment, pressing his head back against the pillow, and brushing his hair from his forehead, as if she thought to charm away with her light fingers his murmuring thoughts.

She succeeded, for the old patient, calm look came over his face, and he said in a very quiet voice, “ Couldn’t we manage some way, mother ? There are those hats,” and he glanced at a pile of plaited straw upon the table ; “ I am sure I could make more if—”

If James had finished his sentence he would have said, “ if I could sell them ; ” but the hopelessness of the case seemed to strike him here, and he said no more.

Mrs. Porter paid no attention to the remark concerning the hats, but she said cheerfully, “ I don’t think this is the very worst thing that might happen. To be sure we shall miss Hetty ; but it will be pleasant to get letters from her, and we shall be so glad to see her in the fall. Besides, James, God knows best, and he has seemed to order it in this way.”

“Yes, I know mother; but if I could only work myself—if I *could* only do something; but,” he added, checking himself, “I ought not to complain; God knows best.”

Mrs. Porter noticed that James looked even paler than usual, and telling him that he must not talk more, she assisted him to the lounge, where, completely exhausted, he lay very still; but his thoughts were busy, and he could not sleep.

After James had lain down Hetty took her books and went up stairs to her own room. This was a particularly pleasant place to her. Here she had passed many quiet hours, with only her beloved books for company. Hetty had early shown a great aptitude for learning. It was one of her most cherished hopes that she should some day be a teacher, and she often thought how nicely she would support her mother and Jamie then. Her mother had sympathized with her in this desire for an education, sending her to school as much as she was able with her limited means.

For once, at least, Hetty went up stairs with none of her lively snatches of song, keeping

time to her steps. As she entered the room, she felt as if it would be a great relief to sit down in her little study-chair that was drawn close to the table and looked so inviting, and have a good cry over her troubles; but she did not; she had something of her mother's force and strength of character about her. She drove back the tears, and commenced to talk to herself, an old habit of hers.

"What a little goosey you are, Hetty Porter; just as if you couldn't work as well as other folks. Well, I suppose I'd better put my books out of the way somewhere. Nobody will want them throwing around. There is mother's chest; they will be as safe there as if they were buried in the depths of the ocean."

Then she lifted the lid and put them down one by one, and it seemed to her as if she was laying by with them all the bright hopes, the beautiful dreams that had been so inexpressibly dear to her. The great red chest was like a grave for them, and something of the pain of those that bend over a grave came with a rush into her heart, and sent the tears, that she could not now restrain, into her eyes. She was wiping

them away, angry with herself for her weakness, when she heard her mother's step behind her, then felt her mother's arm around her.

"Hetty, do you think your mother is very cruel?"

"O no, mamma! you are the dearest, best, kindest mother that ever was," and Hetty rose, and in her quick, impulsive way flung her arms round her mother's neck.

Mrs. Porter unloosed her clinging arms, and commenced in a hurried way to walk the floor. At last she said, speaking rapidly, as if the subject was disagreeable, and one to be got over with as quickly as possible,

"Your father is getting worse and worse; for a long while he has done nothing for us. We are very poor, Hetty; all that I can earn will be barely sufficient to meet our most pressing wants. I shall be very thankful if we do not have to sell our home, but I shall try hard to keep it. I shall work hard this summer, and I hope by fall to be able to have you back to school. I have told you this," she continued, sitting down, "because I wished you to know why I send you from me."

“I don’t want to go to school,” said Hetty; “why shouldn’t I work as well as you? But O, mother, do you think we shall have to sell our home? what would become of us?”

“‘Take no thought for the morrow, for your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of all these things;’ do you believe this, Hetty?”

“Yes, mother.”

“Then don’t let us borrow any more trouble. I want to talk with you now and give you some advice that I think will be of use to you.”

The mother talked long and earnestly with her child, especially of those things, both of a temporal and spiritual character, that would have occurred only to a mother’s mind. In the midst of their conversation they heard the sound of Jamie’s crutches down stairs, and Mrs. Porter said, “James is up now, let us go down; try and be cheerful, Hetty. Poor child, he takes your going away very hard I see.”

The evening passed away very swiftly, there was so much to say, so much to think of. Very earnest were the prayers that were offered up that night. God had given to Mrs. Porter both of her children to walk with her in the road to

heaven. One of them was a very mature Christian, so zealous in his love and works for God that he was sometimes even a reproach to his mother. These three were bound together with a more than natural love. The Christian love sanctified that love, and made it more intense and holy.

Where was Mr. Porter this evening while his wife and children were talking and praying over the sundering of their little family circle? In a grog-shop at the farther end of the village; surrounded by a set of low, vulgar men, listening to, and sometimes joining in, horrid blasphemies against that God his family so loved and revered. Mr. Porter had not been always the man he is to-night. There was a time when he would have scorned his present associations—a time when he went regularly to church, and night and morning prayed with his family. But that time was long ago; he was treading now with a quick step the path to destruction.

Hetty awoke with a start the next morning, for her room was full of light. She had intended to get up very early that morning; but there was no help for it now, and dressing herself as

quickly as possible, she hurried down. Mrs. Porter had arisen long before ; she had got Hetty's trunk all in readiness, and now had breakfast nearly prepared.

“Would you not like to go out in the yard, Hetty, till I call you?” said Mrs. Porter. “You will find James there?”

Among the trees of the yard was a little arbor, which had been made by binding the thick branches of two trees together for the top, and putting a trellis on one end for a vine to clamber over. Hetty was not surprised to find James in this place upon his knees, for he often came here to pray. She sat down quietly on the seat not far from him. Now and then she caught a few whispered words, and she thought she had never seen him look so happy and so beautiful before.*

When the boy arose he did not seem in the least surprised or annoyed at his sister's presence. He smiled his own sweet smile, then sat down by her side without speaking.

“You got up very early this morning, didn't you, Jamie?” said Hetty.

* See Frontispiece.

"Yes, but I lay awake a long while thinking, thinking."

"What about?"

James lowered his voice, and spoke very reverentially as he said, "I was thinking how I wished Jesus was here on earth now, and that I could go and kneel before him, and ask him to heal me; and then he would say, perhaps, 'Do you believe that I am able to do this?' and I thought how truly I could say, 'Lord, I believe.'"

"My poor brother," said Hetty, sadly looking down at the useless limbs, "how I wish you might be healed."

"I didn't care so much for myself, but I *did* want to work for mother; but now, Hetty, I am perfectly satisfied as it is. I believe that God would heal me this very moment if it was for the best. O, the Lord is good, so good to me!"

There was a long pause; then James said, "Hetty, suppose I should never see you after to-day."

"O Jamie! you don't mean you think you are going to die, do you?" and Hetty looked with a sudden fear into his face.

"I only mean perhaps I shall, and perhaps you will ; but if we should, either of us, wouldn't we meet again in heaven ?"

"I hope so," said Hetty.

James clasped his hands, and said in a sort of ecstasy, "O, this world is just nothing compared with that great, wonderful, glorious Eternity !"

Soon they heard their mother's call, and together they went into the house. The moments flew rapidly, for they still had much to say, and soon the carriage drove up to the door.

Mr. Porter had just arisen and come out into the kitchen, as Hetty, with her hat and shawl on, stood ready to go. He made no remark, asked no questions, but sat down sullenly to the breakfast which his wife hastily placed upon the table. What did he care where his child was going ?

Hetty kissed her mother and James ; then a sudden impulse made her turn to her father. She reached her hand toward him, half fearfully, and her voice trembled as she said, "Good-by, father."

Mr. Porter looked up at her with a stupid

sort of wonder ; then pushing away the proffered hand, and saying with a scowl, "Don't be a fool," he turned to his breakfast, nor lifted his eyes from it again.

At another time Hetty would not have noticed this rebuff; but now, as she was going away, it seemed almost more than she could bear. But another kiss from her mother, and a pressure of James's hand, comforted her, and she entered the carriage and was soon borne away, leaving two lonely hearts behind her.

In after years this, her last parting with her father, was one of the saddest pictures in Hetty's memory.

CHAPTER II.

NEW FACES AND NEW SCENES.

HETTY went into the cars feeling rather downhearted, as was very natural for one leaving home for the first time; but she soon forgot herself in her interest in the new faces and scenes around her. She looked out at the houses and trees, that seemed to fly past, then back at the sleepy passengers within, and she found much to interest her in their dull faces. Her imagination supplied her plentifully with information which, if fanciful, was quite interesting.

After a while Mrs. Manson, who was sitting opposite, seemed to catch the prevailing sleepiness, for she leaned back against the cushions and closed her eyes; and Hetty, leaving her pleasant fancies, turned her attention toward her. She thought she read a proud, cold expression on the lady's face, and somehow she felt as if there was not much love or sympathy

in her nature. Perhaps she was wrong, as one is apt to be when they judge hastily ; but the white rose-buds that surrounded the lady's face, the stiff folds of her silk dress, indeed everything about her, all said the same thing to the child, who had always an ear for such mute informers ; and she turned to the window, her thoughts all driven homeward, and wondered how she should live without her mother's kind words, and dear Jamie to help her do right. Then she thought of the great Father who would lead her gently and lovingly if—" if, as Jamie says, I will only put my hand in his." She was praying in her heart for this guidance and love when the cars again stopped, and Mrs. Manson rose, and beckoning her to follow, went out.

Just outside of the village, half hid by a maple grove, was a large white house. This was Mrs. Manson's home, and Hetty thought, as she rode over the long carriage-path, and noticed the pretty grounds, and the wide piazza, that it was almost as grand and nice a place as Squire Lawton's, the one by which she always judged.

As the driver brought his horses to a stand with a loud "whoa," a boy came out of the house, and, flinging open the stage door, assisted Mrs. Manson out, with many exclamations of delight and surprise at her arrival.

Hetty followed them into a little library, which opened from one side of the wide hall. Dr. Manson, the lady's husband, a tall, grave-looking man, in dressing-gown and slippers, was in this room. He rose, and, extending his hand to Mrs. Manson, said, 'Welcome home! you have given us a pleasant surprise.'"

"Yes," said the lady, throwing off her bonnet and shawl, and sitting down by his side, "I changed my plans, and have come home sooner than I intended when I left you."

A long conversation followed, for both the boy and his father had many questions to ask and to answer. Hetty sank down into a chair near the door, feeling very uncomfortable, and wishing heartily that some disposal was made of her. Now and then she caught a quizzical glance from the boy, who was leaning over the back of his mother's chair; but, besides this, she was entirely unnoticed for a very long time,

as it seemed to her. At last Dr. Manson looked toward her, and said to his wife, "Whom have you here?"

"O, I had quite forgotten," replied Mrs. Manson. "This is a little girl I have brought for a peace-offering to Ellis. Watty, my son, will you show her down to the kitchen?"

Watty opened the door and went out, and Hetty followed after. He commenced whistling a tune that had all sorts of ups and downs to it, which he kept up till they had got through the long hall, through a large room that opened from it, down a few stairs, and stood at the kitchen door; then he brought it to a sudden stop, and, turning round, said, "What is your name?"

"Hetty Porter."

He flung open the door and they entered a large room. No one was in sight, but there was a sound of steps above them.

"Ellis! Ellis! where are you?" called Watty.

"I'm up stairs, what do you want?" replied a strong voice.

"Come down a minute."

“Wait till I get through sweeping.”

Watty handed Hetty a chair, a mark of politeness of which he had shown no trace before; then he stood up before a fireplace, in which a few coals were sputtering out tiny sparks, and puckered up his mouth for another whistle; but a new idea seemed to strike him just then, for he unpuckered it before he had well commenced, and drawing round a large covered arm-chair, he said in a whisper to Hetty,

“Just go behind there a minute, where she wont see you. I want to have a little fun.”

Hetty did not see where the fun was coming from; but hardly daring to refuse, or to ask any questions, she went behind the chair, and stooping down out of sight, waited for its development.

Soon steps were heard coming down the stairs and over the floor, that made the chairs and stove jar in time to them. Hetty peeped curiously from one side of her hiding place, and saw a large, queer looking woman standing with a broom in her hand.

“What do you want?” she said.

“O, nothing very particular, only mother has

got home, and she has brought you one of the nicest presents."

"What is it?" and the woman's voice became much pleasanter.

"It's the queerest thing—it can wash dishes and scour knives without your turning a crank or anything."

"O, go away with your fooling."

"It's true, Ellis, honor bright."

When Watty said "honor bright," he considered that he had affirmed a thing as stoutly as it was possible to affirm it. Mrs. Ellis understood this, and her voice had a good deal more of interest in it as she said, "Why, it must be a strange thing, what on earth does it look like?"

"It looks real good; come to think, it would do to set up in the corner for an ornament when you aint using it."

"I don't care for your ornaments," said the woman scornfully; "but now, Watty, you just run up stairs like a good boy and bring it down. I'll get the hang of it, so I can wash up the dishes with it to-night."

"It aint up stairs, I brought it down with me."

"Is it in your pocket?" she said, looking suspiciously at him.

"No; now, Ellis, you needn't think it is any insignificant little thing, that a fellow could put in his pocket. I tell you it's a real, genuine, superfine article."

"Why don't you show it, then? what's the use of fooling?"

"I will, this very minute, if you will promise me one thing."

"Well!" she said impatiently.

"That is, let me make a little paste to-night when you build the fire in the stove."

There was nothing that annoyed Ellis so much as to have Watty "clustering round in the kitchen;" but there seemed to be no other way to satisfy her curiosity, which was becoming insupportable, and she gave her consent.

"Will you now, honor bright?"

"Yes, I say; hurry, wont you?"

Watty pulled aside the chair, and Hetty, blushing under Mrs. Ellis's wondering gaze, rose to her feet.

Watty laughed loudly; and when he noticed Hetty's burning face he burst out into another

explosion, and said, "You needn't be so frightened, she won't hurt you if she does look fierce;" then, before Mrs. Ellis had recovered from her surprise, he left the room, turning as he reached the door to say exultingly, "I'll be down in a little while to make my paste."

"What does he mean?" said Ellis, looking first at the retreating boy, then at the child before her.

"I suppose he means *me*," said Hetty.

"You! who are you?"

"I am Hetty Porter. I came home with Mrs. Manson. She has hired me to work here this summer."

"O!" said Ellis, the light dawning upon her. Then she commenced a deliberate survey, which began at the crown of Hetty's hat, pausing a long time at the blushing face below it, then extending gradually down to the braid on the bottom of her dress.

Hetty was half frightened at first; she was not used to such ill-mannered proceedings; but she glanced up at Mrs. Ellis, and becoming a little reassured, she began to study her in turn.

Ellis was a very tall, spare woman. Her

form and features seemed made up of angles, so square were their outlines. She had light yellow hair, which she wore in a twist almost on the top of her head, and the comb that confined it there towered up, looking, Hetty thought, like a sentinel on some high rampart.

At last Ellis seemed satisfied with her examination; her eyes came up again with a rapid motion to Hetty's face, and she said, "Well, I declare I'm glad if I'm going to have a little help; if there's anybody on earth that needs it I do." Then her thoughts turned to what Watty had said, and she exclaimed angrily, "That boy told a regular lie."

A lie seemed a horrible thing to Hetty, and somehow she felt as if it belonged to her to remove the accusation, so she said, "I don't think he really did; he said I could wash dishes without your turning a crank, and I am sure I can," laughing a little at the idea, then adding somewhat doubtfully, "but he did deceive you," I think.

Ellis paid no attention to Hetty's attempt at palliation. She pointed to a table in one corner and said, "You can take your things off there."

Hetty obeyed, then went and sat down by the fireplace. After a while Ellis brought some coffee for her to look over, saying, "You may as well be doing that as doing nothing;" then she was left alone for a while, for Ellis went up to lay the table for tea in the dining-room.

Hetty and Ellis had tea together in the kitchen. Ellis asked a great many blunt questions which it was a real pleasure for Hetty to answer, it seemed so good to be noticed by somebody. She found out afterward that it was only on rare occasions that Ellis was so sociable. Generally her tongue was a silent member.

Hetty felt a great desire to please, and she said, as she rose from the table, "Now I will wash the dishes better than any machine could, see if I don't."

"No, you'd spile your good clothes; wait till to-morrow, when you have your every-day rig on," said Ellis; and Hetty was very thankful, for she had forgotten that she had on her best dress.

After a while Watty came down to make his paste. He was full of jokes and fun, but for once Ellis was not very much annoyed. The

prospect of having help had put her in good humor.

When Hetty had finished the coffee she helped Watty paste some birds with plumage painted in the brightest colors, and some fierce looking animals, on pieces of canvas ; and he, in consideration of her services, condescended to tell her why he was doing it.

“ You see, we boys are getting up a kind of menagerie ; we have got a lot of snakes, and bugs, and things, and one of the boys got his sister to draw these foreign birds and animals, and I painted them, and I am going to paste them on canvas to make them stout enough to stand the wear and tear, you know.”

Watty went up stairs congratulating himself that the new girl “ wasn’t mopish and cross like Ellis.” “ Why, she’s dreadful obliging,” he said to himself.

At last Hetty went up to the room that Ellis showed her, feeling much happier than she did when she first entered the house and sat so uncomfortably in Dr. Manson’s library. “ It is not so bad as it might be,” she said, repeating her mother’s favorite expression to herself ; then,

falling down on her knees, she prayed earnestly for herself and for the dear ones far away.

Hetty's room was a small one, almost a closet, opening from the one Ellis occupied. "I wonder if she is a Christian," thought Hetty, as she heard Ellis coming up to bed, and she watched anxiously to see if she would kneel down; but she did not; and Hetty covered her face in the bedclothes and thought how much, how very much strength she should need in the new life she was now commencing.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. ELLIS'S STORY.

ONE by one the days passed away, bringing plenty of work, and plenty of steps for the little servant in Dr. Manson's kitchen. There was nothing very hard for Hetty to do; her mother had made that one of the conditions of her coming; but the almost ceaseless motion in which Mrs. Ellis kept her often made her very tired. Besides this there were other little troubles that she found in her new position. Mrs. Ellis was not really cross; but she had such a sharp, quick way of giving her orders, and she was so very unsocial; she kept up such a grim sort of silence, that Hetty was often very lonely, and sometimes a little homesick, though she would never confess it in her letters to her mother and James.

During his vacation Watty was much in the kitchen. He was laying up a pile of wood in the shed, and often in the day he had to stop his work and come into the kitchen to have

a little fun, and play off some of his practical jokes; and Hetty learned after a while to laugh as heartily at them when they were played upon herself, as though they did not annoy her.

Hetty really liked Watty. The gay, lively boy had a way of winning almost everybody for a friend; but after all, he was another of the little troubles that she had to contend with.

Watty Manson was called a very polite, gentlemanly boy. At the little parties that were very fashionable among his young friends, he always shone a "bright particular star," as well for his proper conduct, as for the fun and frolic that seemed a part of his nature. But when he came down the long hall into the kitchen his politeness seemed to evaporate in the whistling that always accompanied him on that route, and when at last he flung open the door, it was all gone and he acted under no more restraint than a young Indian. Hetty did not at all relish the easy superiority that he assumed over her. He abbreviated her name to "Het," an abbreviation that she considered as detracting very much from her dignity.

Hetty went to church and to Sabbath-school

regularly. Mrs. Manson took her into her own class, and after a while the first impression that the lady was stern wore away and she really liked her. She explained very clearly the difficult passages in the Bible lessons, and made the whole interesting with historical facts and anecdotes relating to them ; but there was never that direct appeal to the hearts and consciences of her scholars that Hetty's old teacher always made ; she sometimes talked to them in a general way of their duty to God ; but never spoke to them individually of this, nor tried to lead them with loving words to the Saviour.

Excepting on Sunday, Hetty saw but little of Mrs. Manson ; once in a great while only she came down into the kitchen. She trusted everything to Mrs. Ellis, and Hetty soon found that Ellis was exceedingly proud and jealous of this trust. If at any time anything did go wrong, enough so to call for an explanation or reproof from the lady of the house, Ellis had always an excuse that quite shifted the blame from herself ; and another of Hetty's troubles was, that she was found so convenient a scapegoat for the kitchen accidents ; but this trouble did not

occur often, for Ellis was a thoroughly good housekeeper, and things went along smoothly under her care.

Sometimes Hetty went up stairs on errands, into the rooms which seemed so grand and beautiful to her. The pictures on the walls of the parlor surpassed everything she had ever before seen, and she thought she should never tire of looking at them. One evening she went into Mrs. Manson's room to assist her in dressing, and this room she thought the prettiest in the house. The pure white curtains, the neat engravings on the wall, the easy chairs and lounge, everything so tasteful and rich, that Hetty lay awake long that night, building a house for her mother, James, and herself, with a room in it exactly the counterpart of Mrs. Manson's for her mother's room.

One night, after the day's work was done, as Hetty was standing by the window trying to find something outside for company for her thoughts, her eye fell upon an old-looking house that stood back a little from the road in a large field. She had noticed this house often before. Once she thought she saw smoke ascending from

one of the chimneys; but she had concluded she must be mistaken, for there never seemed to be any stir around there, and it looked such a tumbledown affair as to be hardly a fit dwelling-place for any one. But to-night she took a great interest in the old house; perhaps it was because she could find nothing else outside that would bring her any new thoughts. This was certainly the source for many; for after she had conjured up a history for it, and put in it tenants according to her fancy, she wandered off from the simple ruins that she saw to the grand old ruins of the old country, and traveled round from place to place, visiting them, as she often did, in her imagination.

“You have lived here a great many years, haven’t you, Mrs. Ellis?” said Hetty at last as, tired of her own thoughts, she turned from the window.

During the day it was almost an impossibility to get anything in the shape of conversation from Mrs. Ellis; but there were times when the day’s work was done, and she sat idly before the fireplace, when she seemed to have a little sociability about her. These were golden moments,

as Hetty had found out; and now, as she turned from the window, she felt that one of these rare opportunities had come.

"Yes, a long while," said Mrs. Ellis, in answer to the question:

"How long?" continued Hetty, drawing a chair upon the hearth and sitting down.

"Well, I don't know exactly; ever since Watty was a baby, and he's a great ugly boy now."

"Do you know who lived in that old queer looking house back in the field last?" said Hetty, hurrying to change the conversation.

"I know who lives there *now*," replied Mrs. Ellis.

"Does anybody live there now! I thought it was all in ruins."

"Yes; there's an old man, and a puny little ghost of a child lives there now."

"O, do tell me about them!" said Hetty, hitching her chair up closer, and looking appealingly into Mrs. Ellis's face.

Ellis looked down with a stare into Hetty's eager eyes, and said, "Why, what a queer young one; there isn't any more to tell."

"But, Ellis, now please do begin at the beginning, and tell me all you know about them;" and Hetty, in her eagerness, grasped Mrs. Ellis's hand in hers.

It was something new for Ellis to tell a story; but the touch of Hetty's fingers and the child's eager face, raised so imploringly, prevailed, for Mrs. Ellis had a heart, though, perhaps, it would take a good deal of searching to find it.

"Well, let me see," said Ellis, leaning forward and resting her chin in both hands; "I guess it's about four years since they first came here. His name is Graham, and he's an Englishman. I know Mrs. Manson was saying she wished that old house would take fire and burn up, she didn't like to have such a shabby-looking thing so near her; then the first thing we knew they moved in there. They say he's dreadful rich; but, mercy me, it don't do him any good nor the child either."

"Tell me about the child," said Hetty.

"Well, I don't know much about her; they say she's his grandchild. She came here once to buy a quart of milk, that's the only time I ever saw her; she never goes to school or any-

where ; she was a little puny thing, and she had on a ragged, faded dress. The old man goes away every year—yes, it's just about this time—I presume he's gone now, and that child stays there all alone."

"What does he go for?" asked Hetty.

"Mrs. Manson says that probably he has money, rents, or something due, that he goes to get—that's all I know about them;" and Mrs. Ellis raised her head again; "are you satisfied now?"

"Yes, thank you, Ellis. O, it is dreadful, dreadful, when God is so good to give him money that he should be so wicked about it;" and Hetty looked into the dark ashes and thought of great iron vaults, and bags heavy with gold, and of greedy gray-headed misers, such as she had read about; then she went again to the window, and looked with a new interest at the old house. It was almost night now, and the shadows around it were very thick; but Hetty's fruitful imagination could pierce through them all, and through the dark, thick walls, and it saw a little girl with white hands folded patiently, and such a pale, sad, sweet face, with

beautiful large blue eyes, sitting there in the shadow all alone.

“It’s time to go to bed,” said Ellis from the fireplace. “I’ve got a lot of work to do to-morrow, and I’m awful tired. I wonder if there will ever be any rest for me.”

Hetty turned from the window, and said abruptly, speaking the thoughts that Ellis’s words brought, and somehow these thoughts were connected with the little girl, “There is rest for the weary in heaven.”

Ellis paid no attention to Hetty’s words, but lighted a candle and went up stairs. If she ever had any thoughts of God, or holy things, no one ever knew it, for she never spoke such thoughts.

The little girl glided into Hetty’s prayers that night; and, in asking a blessing for the unknown child, she felt happier herself, and sank to rest with that peace in her heart which only God can give.

CHAPTER IV.

MAGGIE GRAHAM.

A FEW evenings after the conversation with Mrs. Ellis Hetty was sitting again over the large fireplace. This time there was a bright fire blazing there, and red coals sending out a glow that seemed very beautiful and cheery to the child. The day had been damp and rainy, and after a good deal of persuasion Ellis had allowed her to build a fire there.

Hetty was alone now, for Mrs. Ellis had been called up stairs; yet most interesting company danced and leaped up over the andirons, or lay glowing and blinking on the hearth. It was so easy now to build castles and churches, to see queer little figures dressed in flame-colored garments jumping up here and there in all sorts of attitudes, and making all sorts of motions.

Hetty was enjoying her bright fire, and the pictures that were set so thickly in it, when she was almost startled from her chair by a vivid

flash of lightning, and a roar of thunder that seemed to shake the whole house. These were succeeded by many others, and the room was often filled with blinding light.

After the first start and exclamation, Hetty sank back into her chair perfectly composed. She felt no fear, for she knew that God rules the earth at all times, that he holds the lightning under his restraint, and that nothing can harm one of his children but by his permission. Her faith in God was not in name only, but it was a real and substantial feeling which took deep root in her soul and pervaded her whole being.

Louder and louder came the thunder, quicker and more vivid the lightning, and the rain splashed thick and heavy upon the windows.

“What a dreadful night!” said Hetty to herself, throwing another stick upon the fire; “I never saw such sharp lightning in all my life.”

Just then she heard some one step quickly up to the door; then came a timid knock, and before she could rise from her chair the door was pushed open, and somebody, wrapped from head to foot in a large shawl, which was dripping with rain, entered.

Hetty *was* a little frightened now; it was such a strange looking person that had so suddenly intruded upon her. It might have been an old woman, for the form was bent almost double; but she could see nothing but a pair of frightened eyes peeping out from under the shawl.

"Can't I come in here and stay till it gets through thundering?" said a trembling voice in a very appealing tone.

"O yes; certainly, certainly," said Hetty, reassured; "sit down here by the fire, where you can get dry," and she drew another chair to the hearth.

The strange visitor complied; and as the dripping shawl slid down from her head, Hetty saw that it was not an old woman, but a child who sat beside her. As she saw this, every trace of fear vanished, and curiosity took its place.

"Sit up closer, where you can get dry," she said, stirring up the fire. "How came you to be caught out in such a dreadful night?"

"I wasn't caught out," said the child in a low voice, "but I couldn't stay there. I was so frightened, and I *know* there was somebody in the house. I could hear them walking just as

plain, and talking too, so I just snatched up my shawl and ran as fast as I could, and I could hear them running after me just as plain, step, stepping."

"Who? O, I know! You were frightened, and you thought so; were you all alone?"

"Yes, grandpa is gone. O how I wish he would come home!"

"Well, it's too bad. I don't wonder you were frightened," said Hetty, drawing her chair closer to the trembling child. "What is your name?"

"Margaret. Grandpa calls me Mag."

"That's a pretty name, Maggie especially. What's your other name?"

"Margaret Graham."

"Margaret Graham," said Hetty, seizing the little girl's hands in her eager welcome, "how glad I am to see you. Mrs. Ellis told me all about you, and I did so want to see you."

The child looked surprised, and suddenly drew her hands from Hetty with a timid motion. Hetty was a little hurt by this, and she leaned back in her chair and looked at her, not knowing what to say more.

Margaret was pale and thin enough to answer

the description of any miser's child ; but the beauty that Hetty's imagination had endowed her with when she heard Mrs. Ellis's story was not hers ; still there was something winning in the pinched, eager expression of her face, and in the timid, large gray eyes, that Hetty thought were almost as beautiful as the blue ones she had given her. The child's form was very much bent, and between her shoulders was a large bunch, which gave her a very strange, unchild-like appearance.

" You aint afraid now, are you ? " said Hetty, beginning again.

" No, not much," replied the little girl, " but I'm afraid to go back. I could hear somebody rapping on the windows just as plain, and it seemed as if the lightning would burn up the house."

" Always when I'm afraid I pray to God," said Hetty.

" I don't know how to pray," said the child. " I never saw any one. I guess it wouldn't do much good if I did."

" O yes, it would, Maggie ; the Lord would hear you, I *know* he would."

"When you pray to him, don't he ever let anything touch you?"

"No, never."

"Well, I wish I knew how, then; you get down on your knees, don't you?"

"Yes, and then you ask God to take care of you, just as you would ask your grandfather, or any one else, to do something for you."

"Almost always when I ask grandpa to do anything for me he says 'no,'" replied Margaret.

"Well, then you mustn't ask God as you ask your grandfather," said Hetty, correcting herself; "you must expect he will do what you ask him."

"O dear, I don't know how?" she replied despondingly. Then she sat still for a few moments shivering in her wet clothes.

"You must come up stairs with me," said Hetty, "and get on something dry; you will take your death-cold."

Maggie was at first determined to go home; but a look out into the darkness sent her trembling back to the fire, and then she was easily persuaded to stay.

"Will you learn me to pray, so I wont never

be frightened again?" she said, as Hetty drew the dripping shawl from her.

"O yes," said Hetty, eagerly clasping her hand, which this time was not withdrawn. "Let's go right up stairs now; and you must get off your wet clothes as soon as possible."

Hetty said a simple prayer that night, and had Maggie repeat it after her. She was taking her first religious lesson, and it was well she had so childlike a teacher."

"Do you ever read in the Bible, Maggie?" said Hetty, after she had tucked her warmly in bed.

"No; I found a book that said 'Holy Bible' on it once, on the top of the cupboard, but there wasn't anything in it I could understand."

"Don't your grandfather read in it?"

"No, I never saw him; but he's got a lot of great big books that he does read in."

"Did he show you how to read?" continued Hetty.

"Yes, he showed me a good while ago. I can read pretty well now, he says."

Hetty ran down stairs with Maggie's clothes, and spread them out on chairs to dry. She told

Mrs. Ellis, who had just come down, about her visitor, and Ellis's sympathies were aroused by her story for the poor frightened child.

Then she went back again up stairs, and as she bent over Maggie she saw that she was sleeping as calmly as if those dreadful fears had never tormented her.

"I do believe the Lord has heard her, the very first prayer that she ever made," and Hetty bent down and kissed the calm and peaceful face.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL PROJECT.

ALL Hetty's persuasions, strengthened as they were by an invitation from Mrs. Ellis, could not induce Maggie to stay to breakfast the next morning. Her fears had all vanished with the night's shadows, and now she seemed intensely anxious to return to her post of duty, from which the noises of the previous night had driven her.

"You will pray now, wont you, Maggie?" said Hetty, as the little girl, with her shawl over her head, stood ready to go.

"Yes, I will pray if it thunders again and I am frightened."

"O but, Maggie, you ought to pray every night and morning if you aint frightened."

Maggie made no reply. How could she, who had never been taught, know that God is a friend, a precious Comforter as well as a Protector?

"I like you," she said in her childish way, turning back from the door, "you're a real good girl."

"And I like you ever so much," replied Hetty. "I'm going to teaze Mrs. Ellis to let me come up and see you some time."

"Well, I guess grandpa wont care if we stay out doors," said the child; then she turned and walked rapidly away.

All through the day Hetty thought of Maggie Graham. Somehow it seemed as if she was a charge sent to her by God. She pitied the lonely child, and her pity took a practical turn. She determined to do something to make her happier. The Sunday-school was the goal toward which all her thoughts tended; she had been brought up to believe that from these institutions proceeds almost everything of good, and it was no wonder that her first thought should be to get Maggie to attend. At last she became so anxious to talk with her on the subject that Mrs. Ellis was besieged with entreaties, which finally prevailed, and she put on her hat and started for the old house in the large field.

"I don't wonder Maggie gets lonesome and

frightened here," she said to herself as she neared the place; "why, it looks as if it was made on purpose for owls and ghosts to live in."

Hetty was at first undecided at which door to seek admittance; but after running her eye over the building, and seeing that one part of it looked a little more substantial than the rest, she went up to the door in this part and knocked. One knock did not give her admittance, neither did three or four; and feeling greatly disappointed, she was turning to go, when she saw a pair of eyes peeping from the window, and in a moment more heard footsteps approaching.

"Did I frighten you, Maggie?" said Hetty as the little girl opened the door.

"Yes; I couldn't think who it could be," said Maggie, taking hold of her hand and drawing her in, then carefully closing and bolting the heavy door after her.

After the door was closed the long passage was very dark, and but for Maggie's guiding hand Hetty would often have stumbled over its uneven floor. At last Maggie opened the door into a large room which seemed almost

dazzlingly light in contrast with the dark passage, and Hetty looked curiously around.

This room bore the traces of repairs, and had quite a comfortable appearance. There was a fireplace in it, much larger than the one in Dr. Manson's kitchen. In one corner stood a tall clock ticking loudly, and near that an old-fashioned heavy looking chest of drawers, on the top of which were piled a great many large leather-covered books.

"When do you expect your grandfather home, Maggie?" said Hetty, after scanning in the moment's pause, the contents of the room.

"He will come to-morrow, for he said he wouldn't stay but five days, and this makes four. I've kept count of them."

Hetty soon introduced the subject of her visit, and after a great deal of exclamation and persuasion Maggie fell in with the idea, and at last became almost as much interested as Hetty herself.

"If grandpa would only let me," she said; "but I most know he wont." Then she added after a pause, "if *you* would ask him, perhaps—but I don't believe he will let me anyhow."

"I will come up and ask him," said Hetty; I aint much afraid to come."

It was almost dark before Hetty bade "good-by" to her new-found friend; and turned her back upon the old house with its ruins and its one room of comparative comfort.

Watty was in the kitchen trying to mend a fracture in his ball. Every few moments the needle would slip out into his hand so sharply, that if he had been a girl he would surely have cried out with pain.

"O, Het, I'm glad you have come!" he said as she entered. "It's about as much use to ask Ellis to do anything for you as it is to ask a porcupine."

"What is the matter? Of course you can't mend that without a thimble; let me see."

Hetty took her thimble out of her pocket, and soon had the ball-cover stitched nicely together.

"You are one of the 'cutest girls I ever saw," said Watty, by way of showing his gratitude as she handed him the ball.

"Thank you," replied Hetty meekly.

"O you needn't! I will say it again some

time when you do some other little chore for me."

Hetty made no reply; and Watty, after he had gone through with a part of that old tune, stopped short as his eye fell upon Hetty's hat on the table, and, making her a very low bow, he said, "Have you been out making afternoon calls?"

"Yes," said Hetty, laughing.

"Will your ladyship do me the honor to inform me where you have been?"

"To see Margaret Graham."

"What, that old man's girl! I don't believe that story, now; you wouldn't have been here alive and well if you had."

"Mr. Graham wasn't at home," replied Hetty; "but is he such a dreadful man, Watty?"

"I aint afraid of him," said Watty, with a scornful toss of his head, "but a *girl* would be, I guess. He has got the sharpest eyes I ever saw; they are sharper than a two-edged sword; but what on earth started you to go up there?"

With a few questions Watty drew the whole story from Hetty, and she dwelt a long while

upon the idea which now had full possession of her mind—getting Maggie to Sunday-school. Watty was much interested, though he would have been loth to confess it.

“I had to teaze her a long time to make her say she would go; she said she went down to the village once, and there were some boys that made fun of that queer bunch on her back, and called her names, and—”

“They ought to have been thrashed,” interrupted Watty.

“That’s so; she hasn’t got any clothes that look very good, and she says she *knows* her grandfather wont get her any new ones. She tried on her best bonnet and her shawl, and she did look real queer with them on; the bonnet almost hides her face; she looked just exactly like a little old woman all bent over. I am so afraid somebody *will* laugh at her; if they should I know I could never get her to go again.” A sudden thought seemed to strike Hetty here, for she turned to Watty, and said abruptly, “You wont laugh now, will you?”

“I should think you would be ashamed of yourself to ask me such a question,” said Watty,

indignantly. "I wonder, now, if you think I'm such a mean, sneaking fellow as that."

"O no! no!" said Hetty, anxious to appease his wounded dignity, "I didn't really think you would; but you know you do sometimes make fun of me."

"That's an entirely different thing; but, before I would laugh at a little deformed child, I'd, I'd—"

While Watty was trying to think what he would do in such a case Mrs. Ellis called Hetty, and he was left to finish his sentence to himself.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DISAPPOINTMENT.

HETTY tried to make herself believe that she was not at all afraid as she walked again toward the old house. Perhaps she was not; but for some cause or other her heart beat a great deal faster than usual, and her hands trembled as she put down the bars close to the house.

This was the day she had set to ask permission for Maggie to go to Sunday-school; and, in accordance with the arrangement, she found Maggie was waiting outside for her.

"Is Mr. Graham in there?" said Hetty in a whisper.

"Yes; he is sitting down by the table reading. Maybe you hadn't better go in. I don't believe it will do any good."

"O yes, I will," said Hetty quickly. "Let us go right in now, and not stand here and dread it."

Maggie held out her hand, and again led

Hetty through the dark passage. Every moment Hetty's heart beat faster and faster, and the excitement sent a very uncomfortable rush of blood to her face.

Maggie led her up before a table where an old man was sitting. Her first impulse was to cover her face with both hands as he turned his eyes upon her; but with a grand effort she rallied up all the courage she had left, and said:

"Mr. Graham, I have come up to ask you—to see—if you would let Margaret go to Sunday-school."

If Hetty had been one of the greatest of natural curiosities, the old man could not have regarded her with more fixed attention. She knew those dreadful eyes Watty had spoken about were upon her, though she had not the courage to raise her own. At last he pointed to the door, and said in a very sharp voice, "You had better go home. I don't want anybody hanging around here."

Hetty was not long in taking this advice. She only stopped long enough to see the tears start in Maggie's eyes; then she hurried out, and,

stumbling through the dark passage, she found herself outside at last; and, with her disappointment, and her great indignation at being treated so uncivilly for company, the road to Dr. Manson's seemed very short.

If there ever was a time when Hetty wished to be left quite alone, it was that evening as she sat down to think; but she was disappointed in this, for, just as her thoughts had driven a big tear into each eye the door opened, and Watty came in.

He noticed the hurried wiping of her eyes, and he came up and peered with a droll expression into her face.

"Who has been breaking your heart now?" he said; "is it smashed entirely?"

Hetty made no reply to this, but turned her head away with an impatient motion. Watty, like all his sex, was a great hater of tears, and not knowing exactly what to say, he stood for a moment in silence; then thinking, perhaps, if he asked a civil question he might get an answer, he said: "Have you been up to Mr. Graham's to-day?"

After a little while Watty knew the whole

story; and at its conclusion he laughed as he said:

“Well, I thought you were making pretty big calculations the other night. That old man is cross as a bear. He ought to be shut up in a room, and have nothing but tigers and wolves to wait on him all his life.”

CHAPTER VII.

WATTY A HELPER.

THE next morning, as Hetty was standing before the large table washing the dishes that stood in big piles there, the outside kitchen door opened, and Watty, with a gun slung over his shoulder, came in.

“Well, Het,” he said, (leaning his gun against the wall and sitting down by the table,) “I’ve bearded the lion in his den, I’ve tamed the tiger, I’ve charmed the rattlesnake.”

“Relate your adventures,” Sir Knight, said Hetty, “and you shall be crowned with—”

“A wreath of laurel by the lily-white hands of the fairest lady in the land; are they yours, Het?” said Watty, interrupting her, and glancing down into the soapsuds, where Hetty’s hands, looking, if the truth must be told, rather coarse and red in that position, were moving busily among cups and plates.

Hetty blushed a little as her eyes followed

Watty's; then, with an impatient toss of her head, she said, (adopting Mrs. Ellis's oft-repeated words,) "I wish you would go up stairs."

"Well, I will," said Watty, jumping up and going toward the door. "I was going to tell you something, but you will have to whistle for it now."

Hetty did not whistle for it; she did not, even by a look, invite him to come back; but he, though evidently regretting the necessity of coming without an invitation, could not keep the story to himself, and sitting down again he commenced without further preliminaries.

"You see some of us boys went into the woods hunting, and when we were coming back past that old shanty, who should we see but the old man himself, out trying to put up the fence round his garden; it was all blown down flat; he would get up one end of the rail and go to fix the other, when down the whole would tumble. I happened to think of that little girl of his, and thinks I, 'Now, sir, I'll try my hand on you myself, and see what luck I have;' so I told the boys not to wait for me, and started off that way. Well, he was glad enough to get my help, so he



Watty's Tactics.

didn't snap at me as he would have done. After I had got well to work and showed him how nicely I could put the rails up, I commenced to talk with him about that girl, Maggie, I believe you called her. I talked like a lawyer. I can't begin to tell you all I said, and he had to listen, for you see I was helping him all the time."

"What did he say?" asked Hetty.

"I was coming to that; after all I could say, he wouldn't promise to let her go to Sunday-school; but, just as I had got about the last rail up he said, 'Mag told me that girl that was up here yesterday lives to your house;' and when I said 'Yes,' he said, 'If you want to, you may tell her that I won't mind if she does come up once in a while to see that young one of mine; she has done nothing but cry and teaze ever since.' 'I don't see, for my part,' continued Watty, 'why that won't be as well as to have her go to Sunday-school, and better in some respects, for then there will be no danger of her being laughed at. Don't you think you ought to thank me for what I have done?'"

"Yes, I do thank you," said Hetty.

"When a girl has any trouble, all she can do

is to sit down and cry over it; no wonder she grows up so soft; but a boy will make a thing work somehow. Not that I cared anything about this, but I thought I would be your lawyer and practice a little, because I expect to be a lawyer some time. But it was a hard case—a hard case,” and Watty pretended to wipe the perspiration from his face.

“I don’t believe I shall go,” said Hetty after a pause.

“And why not?”

“Well, I don’t care about going to a place where I have been sent home once,” and there was quite an expression of pride on Hetty’s face.

This was a new idea to Watty; probably, if he had thought on the subject at all, he would have said that a girl who washed dishes, made beds, and swept, had no right to be particular.

“Well, I am sure I don’t care whether you go or not; but I guess, after all, you don’t care so much about that little Maggie as you pretend to. I should suppose when you think of that little lonesome girl there crying—”

“I believe I will go after all,” interrupted

Hetty, her pride beginning to thaw at the mention of Maggie's tears.

Watty went up stairs, but soon came down again with a book of colored engravings.

"You might take these up," he said; "perhaps it would keep her from being lonesome sometimes."

Toward night Maggie herself came down; her grandfather had given her permission to recall his words. If Hetty had any pride left, it quite vanished under Maggie's pleadings. The little girl's eyes were very red, affirming, by their appearance, Watty's assertion. Poor child, she had had a little taste of the enjoyment of society, and the giving it up had been very hard for her.

"We can play Sunday-school," said Maggie; "can't you come down every Sunday and have one right there in our house?"

"I don't know. There is a long time Sunday afternoons that I have nothing to do; but I don't know as it would be exactly right." This Hetty said to herself more than to her companion. But she added after a moment's thought, "I don't believe there *could* be any harm in it. I

will go. Yes, Maggie, can you get a Sunday-school lesson?"

Without waiting for a reply, Hetty ran up stairs and got her little pocket Testament. She opened it at the second chapter of Matthew, and said, "We will begin right here, Maggie. You can learn as many verses as you please, and we will talk about it, and I will tell you all I know about it. Wont we have a good time?"

Maggie readily assented to this; then putting the Testament in her pocket she started for home, for her grandfather, she said, had told her not to stay a minute.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRANSLATION.

THE Sabbath-school, as Hetty and Maggie called it, was a blessing to both the teacher and scholar who were its members—a blessing to Hetty, for, in trying to benefit and make Maggie happy, she was humbly following the great Master's example, whose entire life was a mission of love and of doing good to others, but more especially was it a blessing to the little lonely child. Maggie was not an especially ignorant child on all subjects; but on the subject of religion she was very much so. She had some vague ideas of God and heaven; but of the love of Christ, the wonderful story of his life and death, she knew almost nothing; but as she read the Testament, and Hetty explained it to her, the light dawned upon her; and she who had scarcely known anything of earthly love opened her heart readily to this wondrous heavenly love and her lonely life was made brighter and happier on account

of the teaching of a little girl not many years older than herself. In her childlike way she took in all the great truths of the Bible without a doubt; and who shall say that God did not bless this simple faith, and that Maggie was not a Christian, though, perhaps, she could never tell at what precise time she was adopted into God's great family.

A room as far as possible from the only ten-antable one of the house in which Mr. Graham always sat was chosen for the Sunday-school. Hetty went up one afternoon and helped Maggie to brush down the curtains that the spiders had hung over the window and around the walls, and to sweep the floor, whose dust had probably lain undisturbed for years. Then they found a couple of broken chairs in one of the rooms, and, carrying them up, their apartment was furnished.

It was seldom that Hetty saw anything of Mr. Graham; and if by chance she did meet him, he scarcely ever paid any attention to her by word or look, and when he did she would rather he had not done so, for his very greeting had something sour about it.

And so the summer days glided away. Hetty had commenced already to count the days before the fall term of school at home would commence; but of late there was mingled with her expectations a little fear, for her mother had not for a long time written anything about her coming, and she was afraid by the tone of the letters that things were not much better at home, and that her mother was not much richer than when she left.

One afternoon Ellis sent Hetty up stairs on an errand to Mrs. Manson. These errands were always welcome, for they broke in upon her monotonous kitchen life, and gave her an opportunity to see something more agreeable than its coarse surroundings.

Mrs. Manson was engaged in the sitting-room giving her parting orders to a young dress-maker, who was standing with a large bundle in her arms. She motioned Hetty to wait, then she continued with her directions.

Watty was sitting by a table with a large lexicon before him. He turned over leaf after leaf, and looked down the long columns hurriedly, and a cloud on his face that did not at all become

him grew darker with every column passed over.

"Botheration," he said at last, very emphatically pushing the book away from him with a jerk that sent a number of smaller ones upon the floor.

"Watson, my son, I am surprised," said Mrs. Manson, turning toward him.

"Well, mother, I am sorry, but I can't help it. This Virgil lesson bothers me tremendously. I can read it all pretty well but one line, and I might as well try to read Chinese as that. I can't get the least particle of sense out of it."

"Be patient; take time to look out the words."

"Yes, I suppose I may as well give up all hope of having any fun first as last. The boys are waiting for me this very minute to play base-ball. You see they have chosen me umpire this week, so I not only spoil my own fun but their's too." After a moment's pause he took up his book, and going to Mrs. Manson, said:

"You just look at it, mother; I shouldn't wonder if you could read it right off."

Mrs. Manson took the book and read over the

words slowly. In a moment she handed it back, saying,

“No, Watty, it has been so long since I have read Latin I have forgotten all about it. Pile up your books now and go to your game, your father will help you this evening,” and Mrs. Manson turned again to the dressmaker.

“Father never helps me; he says I must look out my lessons for myself; and Mr. Sheldon will never excuse me,” said Watty as, sitting down again by the table, and resting his head on both hands, he looked hopelessly upon the open book.

When Mrs. Manson repeated the words, Hetty recognized them at once. She remembered spending a long time looking out that very passage only a few days before she left home; and, for being sorry for Watty, and perhaps quite willing to show him that she knew more than he gave her credit for, she went up to the table and said in a low voice,

“I know just how it goes, Watty, let me read it for you;” and before he could speak she drew the book from between his elbows and read the passage.

If Hetty, the little servant girl, touched, like Cinderella, with the magic wand of some good godmother, had stood before him, resplendent in satin gown and glass slippers, Watty Manson could not have been more surprised. Hetty enjoyed his looks of astonishment exceedingly; but she did not give him a chance to express it in words, for just then the dressmaker closed the door behind her, and Hetty went up to Mrs. Manson and did her errand; then, with a shy look of triumph toward Watty, she left the room.

From that day there was a great change in Watty's deportment toward Hetty. He never mentioned the subject of the lesson, for, truth to tell, it was not a very agreeable one. The idea that a *girl*—a girl, too, younger than himself, and, to cap the climax, a girl who worked in his mother's kitchen, could read what he could not, was exceedingly mortifying. But though he never mentioned it in words, his actions showed plainly that he remembered it. Hetty, by means of those few words in Virgil, had climbed up a great many rounds on the ladder of his estimation. He seemed to think that

fate was very cruel in obliging a girl who could read Latin to do kitchen work, and he showed his sympathy in various ways. He dropped the offensive "Het" at once, and became almost as gentlemanly in his mother's kitchen as in her parlor.

There are many older than Watty Manson who act by precisely the same principle. The poor and ignorant are like so many machines set in motion in the morning to run through the day. No allowance is made for nerves, none for a sensitive heart beating somewhere among the whirl of wheels; therefore, nothing like politeness is necessary in the intercourse with them.

Hetty did not fail to set down this agreeable change to the right cause; and as she saw how much good that little knowledge had done for her, it is no wonder that she should be desirous of increasing it. This desire was perfectly proper; but in Hetty's case it was allowed to grow into murmurings against Providence.

"No one is anybody unless they have an education," she said to herself over and over again, and each time with a more decided feel-

ing that she was, by somebody or something, very cruelly and unjustly treated.

Hetty, on the morning she left home, had, without her mother's knowledge, smuggled a French grammar into her trunk. She had said to herself, "Perhaps I may get a little time, and if I do it wont do any harm to learn a few of those verbs;" but the spare time had never come; she had scarcely opened the book since she had been at Dr. Manson's. Now she turned to her French grammar with a determination that, somehow or other, she would find time to study it. She was determined to grapple with fate, and this seemed to be the only way she could do so at present.

Hetty carried out her resolutions bravely. Often in the early morning, or late at night, she would sit up in bed, with a shawl drawn over her shoulders, to study; she repeated French verbs to herself, in the midst of washing dishes and scouring knives, and French verbs were for a while almost her meat and drink. Gradually, the time that she had before held as sacred was intruded upon, the holy words of the Bible were strangely mixed up with irregular conjugations,

and sometimes thoughts of them were in her heart when she was on her knees pretending to pray.

Hetty was very miserable all this time. She tried to make herself believe that she loved God as much as she ever did, but that stern voice in her soul told her she did not. Her religious life was dying out. Her hurried prayers could not be tolerated by a holy God.

Perhaps Mrs. Ellis did not notice any change in Hetty, for she was still ready to do all her bidding. Perhaps Maggie did not, for she still read the Testament to her, told her stories, and taught her Sabbath-school hymns. Perhaps Mrs. Porter did not mistrust it, for Hetty was very careful that none of her murmurings should creep into her letters; but she herself felt the change, and it is no wonder that she became unhappy.

Early in the fall Mrs. Porter wrote to Hetty, saying that "she was very sorry," but she found her desire of having Hetty back to school that fall was doomed to disappointment. Things had not gone as well as she had hoped and Hetty must be patient and "wait."

Hetty had feared this, but the truth was none the less bitter. She received the letter with a passionate burst of tears, quite unlike the patient Hetty of other days.

Mrs. Porter wished very much to have Hetty come home on a visit, but Mrs. Ellis set her face like a flint against this ; so she still stayed in Dr. Manson's kitchen; and still she clung to her French grammar.

CHAPTER IX.

JAMIE'S PRAYER.

"When Jesus calls me, I must go
To meet him in the promised land."

JAMES PORTER repeated these lines softly to himself one afternoon sitting in the open door, looking out upon the trees and shrubs, whose summer green was fast changing to the gold and crimson of autumn.

"I should feel all ready to go, mother, if—if I could only see father a Christian first," he said, hesitating on the last words. "It is only just getting into a chariot all waiting for you, and going up, up, you don't know where, but it is so beautiful all around you."

Mrs. Porter moved uneasily in her chair. She did not like to hear him talk so familiarly on this subject, dreadful to her when she thought of it in connection with her children. Jamie's words for weeks past had often sent a thrill of fear through her heart. She would not have

confessed this fear. She tried not to believe that his words were prophetic. Nevertheless, the belief and the fear were there, very real, and very uncomfortable.

James did not think of death as something far away, something unreal and shadowy, but as a presence very near to him. True, he thought sometimes with pain of leaving his mother and sister; but the only object that seemed really to bind him to earth was his father. He had always prayed for him, but never before had there seemed to be such a weight and agony of prayer laid upon him. He was thinking of him hour after hour in the long day, and sometimes he could not sleep for the thoughts of the condemnation resting upon such as his father pressing heavily upon his heart, till he found relief by sliding down from the bed upon his knees, and repeating his oft-repeated prayer in his behalf.

One afternoon, as the daylight was just beginning to fade from the little front room, James was lying upon the lounge. He had been sleeping; but he opened his eyes just as Mr. Porter rose from the table and took his hat to go out.

Mr. Porter glanced at his child lying there so still and white, almost the picture of death. As he did so, James turned his head and met his father's eye, and he saw at once that he was not intoxicated, a circumstance that was getting more rare every day.

A sudden thought and desire seemed to strike him, for he said quickly, "Don't go away, father; stay with me, I am all alone."

While Mr. Porter had long ago lost his love and interest for his wife and Hetty, the little crippled boy had still a large share in his affections—larger, perhaps, than he himself knew. He was not yet a totally depraved man, and there were times when the good impulses rose strongly and strove for the mastery.

Mr. Porter laid down his hat and came toward the lounge. "Why, Jimmie, how like a scarecrow you look," he said; "you aint sick, are you?"

"I guess not; I don't feel any pain; you will stay with me a little while, wont you?"

"I can't; I've got to go down street. Where's your mother?"

"She has gone to carry her work home.

Can't you afford to stay with me one evening, father? I am going to leave you before long."

Mr. Porter looked surprised; but James continued quietly, "I am going to die, father."

Mr. Porter burst out into a coarse laugh, and said, "No such thing Jimmie; don't be a fool. You are going to be a man yet, and like as not you wont always be lame either. When I get around to it I am going to send you off to that man—what's his name?—to be cured."

This was an old promise. When Mr. Porter felt any stirrings of pity for his patient child, or any self-condemnation because he did not fulfill the father's duties to him, this was the way he quieted his conscience, "Jimmie should be sent off to be cured."

James shook his head with a smile, then placed his thin white hand in his father's.

"Dear father, Jesus will cure me before long. It don't make me feel bad to thing of dying, only I am sorry to leave you, and mother, and Hetty; but they are going to heaven too when they die; and you, father, you will, wont you?"

Mr. Porter shook off the light hand, rose impatiently, and walked toward the door.

"I knew it would be something like that you would be saying to me! What's the use, boy? don't get me mad at you. First, it's the parson; he will get hold of my shoulder, and go over a long yarn of his stuff: then Squire Lawton will corner me up somewhere, and tell me what a mean, wicked fellow I am; and now you try to soft soap it over. I tell you, if that's what you are trying to get at and are afraid to say it, "I must drink, I can't help it, and there's no use talking."

"I'm so sorry," said James sadly.

Mr. Porter seized his hat and rushed out of the door; but his heart had been touched, as only James could touch it. He reached the gate, looked a moment down street, then turned half reluctantly back. "What if he *should* die there all alone?" he said to himself; "she must be a curious woman to leave him so, not a soul around."

James did not hear his father's step in the room; he was lying very still with his hands clasped. Mr. Porter went up to the lounge and caught a few words of a simple prayer that made him very uncomfortable. But he was not the one

to acknowledge such feelings, and sitting down by the lounge, he said in a loud voice :

“ See here, Jimmie, I have come back to stay with you till your mother comes.”

James opened his eyes and turned to his father. “ You are ‘ real good, father. I am so sorry for you. O, father, you don’t know how much I pity you ! ”

“ Pity me ! well, to be sure, I haven’t heard that word these many years. But you was always a good little boy, Jimmie, a little soft and chicken-hearted to be sure, but a good little boy always.”

“ Then you will miss me a little when I am gone.”

“ But you aint going ; what’s put that notion into your head ? ”

“ But if I *should* die, father ! ”

“ Yes, of course, I shouldn’t have any one to pity me then,” and Mr. Porter tried to laugh.

“ Jesus pities you,” said James, speaking with a courage that was not natural to him, for he knew his father seldom listened quietly to talk of this character.

But Mr. Porter was not angry now ; he could

not be with that whispered prayer for him still in his mind. He said nothing, but tried to look stern and indifferent.

"Wont you let me talk with you?" continued James, half fearfully.

"Yes, go ahead, if it will do you any good; I suppose I can listen."

"And you wont be angry with me, I know. O, father, I have prayed for you so much, and somehow it seems just as if God was going to help you stop."

James hesitated; he did not like to say that other word. Mr. Porter said it for him, his voice trembling more with feeling than with anger. "Stop drinking! no use praying for that. Don't pray for me any more, Jimmie. I don't like to have you."

"But, father, I know you would like to break off from this dreadful habit."

"Like to break off!" said Mr. Porter, rising and walking the length of the room, then looking almost fiercely back. "I'd work on my hands and knees day in and day out if I could get rid of this—"

He did not finish his sentence, but came back

and sat by the lounge. "You have made a sneaking baby of me," he said, "but I would never have said that to any one else. You never seemed to hate me for what I am ;" this he said more to himself, as he leaned forward and looked steadily upon the floor:

"You can break off, if you would only pray to God. He will give you strength."

"Pray! what's the use of praying?"

"But the Lord would help you; only try."

"I tell you, I don't know how to pray; what's the use of tormenting me?"

James sank back upon the lounge and covered his eyes with both hands. After a moment he commenced again in a trembling voice,

"Do you mind, father, one Sunday, a long time ago, how you carried me in your arms to Sunday-school? I can remember it just as plain. Mother led Hetty, and it was the first time either of us ever went. I remember just how bright the sun shone, and how beautiful everything looked. You used to pray then, didn't you? or you wouldn't have taken so much pains to get us there. Don't you remember it, father?"

Mr. Porter *did* remember it; there was scarcely a moment in his sober hours that memories of those days did not haunt him.

"Yes, yes, I remember; you was a little bit of a fellow then. It was the first Sunday after the new church was finished, and I gave two hundred dollars for that very church; but that was nothing then, for I expected before this time to be richer than Squire Lawton himself. Well, to be sure," he added, with a low laugh that somehow sounded very unnatural, "I was a fool then, and I am a bigger one now."

"But, father, we might have all those happy days back for us all. Wont you, now, O wont you ask God to help you? Wont you pray as you used to?"

Mr. Porter leaned back in his chair, and clasped his hands together moodily. Not only did he hear the voice of that frail child pleading with him, but he heard the voice of conscience speaking louder than it had spoken before for a long while.

"I tell you I can't pray; it wouldn't do any good if I could."

"Yes, father, Jesus pities you. He was

in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."

Mr. Porter made no reply, and James continued after a pause: "If *you* can't pray, father, *I* can. If you would only let me pray a little while now: you wont mind, will you?"

James waited a moment in vain for a reply; then he slid from the lounge to the floor, and, clasping his hands, commenced to plead for his father in a voice that trembled at first, but gathered strength as he proceeded.

Mr. Porter felt very uncomfortable. He would have been glad to be out of reach of that voice; but he could not rise; he seemed as if chained to his seat. Never before had James prayed with such earnestness, never before had he come so near to God. Long did he plead in simple, childish words; but at last his voice, which had been strong and clear, died out to a whisper, his head fell forward upon the lounge, and he lay still, panting for breath; he had exerted himself so much in prayer that the strength was all gone from the frail body.

Mr. Porter started up and lifted his child upon the lounge. "He is dying!" he said in a voice

of agony as he looked at the still, white face. But James opened his eyes after a moment, and looked with a smile into his father's face.

When Mrs. Porter returned she found her husband kneeling by the lounge bathing Jamie's temples. This was an unusual sight to her, but she made no remark, and he in a few moments took his hat and went out, while Mrs. Porter occupied his vacant place.

Mr. Porter did not go to the bar-room that night. He wandered around the village an unhappy, conscience-stricken man, paying no attention to the greetings or jeers of his low associates, whom he met now and then in the street. At an early hour he returned home, and as he lay down that night his mind was in a strange state, between remorse for the past, and alternate hope and despair for the future ; but this thought was the chief one in his mind : "James shall be sent off to be cured." He resolved over and over again that he would find work, so that he might be able to effect this. Alas for the resolutions that are made in our own strength !

CHAPTER X.

DEATH.

THERE came a warm, pleasant day among the latest in the fall. It was one of those which strike us with an indefinite feeling of sadness, by its suggestions of death written so plainly in the glow and flash of the foliage amid the decay and death prevailing in the natural world. So as life merges into death comes the brightest tints. Death's shadow is more glorious far than Life's brightest noonday. Perhaps something like these thoughts came to James as he sat by the open window ; and, sitting there, he seemed himself but a part of the autumn picture that represented the triumph of that which we call Death over Life, for the same shadow was passing over him, and his life was glowing as brightly under it as glowed the life of Nature around him.

“It is so beautiful to-day, and I feel so well, I should like to go out into the village,” said

James, turning from the window; "perhaps it will be the last time—this summer," he added, as he noticed the look of pain on his mother's face.

With some reluctance Mrs. Porter consented. Tying around his neck the warm red tippet and bringing him his crutches, she bade him again and again "to be careful, don't go too far, and be sure and come home early."

Mrs. Porter watched from the door as long as she could see the little bent figure, and until the last gleam of the red tippet streaming back in the wind disappeared, then she returned to her little sewing-chair, and if we could have heard the prayer that went up from her heart as she sat still a moment before taking up her work, it would doubtless have formed itself into these words: "O God, spare me my children!"

A word just here in regard to the calls James was in the habit of making. When he was very young he had been converted to God, and from that hour there had arisen a great desire, which grew stronger as his religious life strengthened, to do something for God. He could not sit idly by, although he was weak, and almost helpless. Poor child, he did not realize that he was doing

far more in the Lord's vineyard than many to whom strength and ability have been given. He went from house to house among his acquaintances, and many who would not listen patiently to religious talk from others could not resist James's earnest childish pathos. Pity for him, probably, constrained many to listen, and to welcome him to their homes; but many more loved him as they would love a ray of glad sunshine in a dark place. He read his Testament by the bedside of the sick, he talked of heaven so familiarly that it seemed almost like bringing it down to earth; and sometimes by these bed-sides he offered up simple, earnest prayers for their occupants. Doing this, James did not think that he was overstepping the bounds of propriety, nor indeed was he; it was not every one, perhaps, that could have done as he did; but James had been called and fitted of God, and out of the mouth of this child the praise of God was being perfected.

On the afternoon of which we write he visited a number of his friends, and never before had he seemed so happy, never before had he carried such an atmosphere of heaven with him.

“He’s an angel, sure,” said old Mrs. Caty, an Irish woman, “an’ it wont be long he’ll be for staying in this cold world; the wings’ll grow before long, mind ye.”

James was not aware he had stayed late, till the shadows of night admonished him; then, fearful of giving his mother uneasiness, he hastened homeward. He reached a corner, and was just turning it, when he saw a sight that made him pause. Coming down the street, with his arm linked in that of one of his low associates, was Mr. Porter. He was swaggering along, talking very loudly, and sometimes profanely. This was not an unusual sight, but it was a particularly unpleasant one to James just then. Since the day he had talked and prayed so earnestly with his father, he had fondly hoped that a change was coming over him. He had shut his eyes persistently against facts, and tried hard to believe what he so much wished to believe. Now he was undeceived; but over all the pain and disappointment rose the intense desire to save him yet. He knew well where his father was going, for just down the road was that dreadful grog-shop.

He sprang forward as Mr. Porter came near him, and placing a hand upon his arm, said quickly, "O, father, don't you go there, come home with—"

Mr. Porter looked up with surprise; then a flash of anger came over his face. It was quite a different thing to be moved and led by James when he was alone with him, and to be persuaded in the presence of his associates. He was partially intoxicated, and a laugh from his companion roused his cowardly shame. Not realizing what he was doing, he gave James a quick push, and saying angrily, "Go home!" passed rapidly on.

James tried to balance himself, tried to catch something to save himself from falling, but in vain; he fell heavily, his head striking against a stone step. A few moments of consciousness of great pain, then a numbness came over him, and he lay insensible.

He was lifted up soon after by a man passing on the street. He was immediately recognized, for everybody in the village knew Jamie Porter, the crippled boy, and then they carried him home to his mother.

Restoratives were applied, a physician was called, everything was done, but for some time it was done in vain. At last he opened his eyes and looked around, but it was a strange, wild glance. "He is out of his head," whispered the doctor, as James muttered something in a low voice.

"Will he live?" said Mrs. Porter, an hour later, as the doctor took his hat to go.

"I will call again in the morning," he said evasively, turning from her.

"But, doctor, will he live?"

"I cannot tell; it was a hard blow, and he hasn't much constitution to help him rally. It is a hard case, but I will do all I can."

Mrs. Porter turned with a sickening feeling to the lounge. James lay with his eyes half closed, still muttering those incoherent whisperings.

"Don't you know me, Jamie?" she said, bending over him, and listening to his words.

But no gleam of recognition came into his eyes as he looked up at her. She caught the word "father," repeated many times, with something between that she could not understand.

Late in the morning of the next day, as Mrs.

Porter still sat by the lounge, where she had watched all night, her husband entered. His face wore the surly look that it always did after a night of debauchery. Toward morning he had come home intoxicated, and the neighbors who were in, out of pity for his wife, hastened him off to bed, where he slept heavily, knowing nothing of the life and death so evenly balanced in the room just below him.

There came a few words of a demand for breakfast, but they were checked as his eyes fell upon the lounge.

“What is the matter?” he said hurriedly.

“He has been hurt very badly; he fell at the corner and hit his head; I am afraid he will die,” she said, her eyes filling.

In a moment the whole occurrence of the preceding day flashed into the mind of Mr. Porter. Mrs. Porter was prepared to see him show some feeling, for she knew that he loved James as much as he was capable of loving anybody, but she was not prepared for the violent emotion he did show. His limbs trembled, and his face turned very white. “I have killed him!” he said, sinking down into a chair.

"What do you mean?" said Mrs. Porter, shocked and surprised at his words.

He made no reply, but sat still a moment trembling all over, and rocking himself to and fro; then he rose, and coming to the lounge, sank down by its side.

"What do you mean?" again asked Mrs. Porter.

"I mean I killed him. I pushed him down; wretch, villain that I am!"

Mrs. Porter soon after found out the whole truth; but though not understanding now her husband's words, she dared ask no more questions.

All that day and night James was delirious, and Mr. Porter was nearly so. He walked the floor almost constantly; he would eat nothing, and speak to nobody but the doctor, whom he entreated over and over to save James.

Conscience was speaking to him very loudly now, and he could not put by its upbraidings at pleasure. Wicked and dissolute as he had been, there were none who saw him through all that long day and night that did not pity him. James continued to grow worse, so much so that they

dared not remove him to a bed, but made him as comfortable as possible with pillows on the lounge. Often he would cry out for his father, and beg of him in imploring tones not to go away. "Father, stay with me."

But after two days the delirium left him. He had just awakened from a short sleep, when he said in a low, almost breathless whisper, "Mother."

"Do you know me, my son?" said Mrs. Porter, looking eagerly into the large blue eyes, from which the wild, vacant stare was now gone.

Mr. Porter heard his wife's words, and sprang toward the lounge. James saw him in a moment, and lifting, with a great effort, his feeble hand, he placed it in his father's, "Dear father."

"O Jimmie, my boy, I have killed you!" said Mr. Porter, sinking down and hiding his eyes from James's deathly face.

It was evident now that James was dying; but even as his sight was growing dim, as every sense was leaving him, he was true to the work which had so filled his heart—leading his father to God.



The Penitent.



"Dear papa, I am dying ; wont you promise me now? O, father—"

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Porter quickly, "I will do anything ; but don't die, Jimmie, don't. I will promise anything you ask. I will send you off to be cured. I will do everything."

So with these almost frantic promises Mr. Porter strove to ward off the angel of death. James lay a moment still and calm, while the shadow that the angel cast brightened into glory on his face, then he rallied again and said in a low whisper, "Jesus will help ; pray, father ;" then he turned his glassy eyes to his mother, and made an effort to speak ; but the words died into an inarticulate whispering. She bent eagerly forward, but caught only the words "Mother, Hetty." A few quick catchings of the breath, a few short struggles, then all was over.

CHAPTER XI.

LIFE FROM DEATH.

"A LETTER for you, Hetty!" said Watty, coming in and tossing one upon the table.

Hetty glanced up with a look of welcome for the letter, and recognized her mother's handwriting. Little thinking what a weight of sorrow the tiny envelope contained, she continued with her work, for it made Mrs. Ellis scold if, under any pretext, she stopped in the midst of it. But at length, as Mrs. Ellis left the kitchen, Hetty's impatience got the better of her faithfulness, and wiping her hands hurriedly she opened the letter. "I must just peep in and see if they are all well," she said; "it has been a long time since mother has written, and Mrs. Ellis will never know it."

But the first line she read made her forget all about Mrs. Ellis. Jamie was dead! She stood with the letter crushed in her hand, hardly comprehending the terrible truth; but when, at

last, its full meaning came to her, she sank down by the table, and bowing her head on her arms, great sobs shook her frame.

“What on earth is the matter!” said Mrs. Ellis, coming in, and standing still in astonishment at the unusual sight.

Hetty held out the letter by way of reply, for she could not speak.

“What *is* the matter! your mother aint dead, is she?”

“No, no; it’s Jamie, my brother,” she said between her sobs.

“Well, that’s too bad,” said Ellis, moving toward her work; “but you just chirk up, Hetty, and finish washing the dishes, and then you may go up stairs and stay till dinner time.”

Hetty obeyed; but how wearily passed the remainder of her work! She finished it with trembling hands, and with the hot tears running down her face.

But at last it was done; the dishes were all piled away, and Hetty for a short time was free. She went up stairs with a slow step, and flinging herself by the side of the bed, wept and sobbed herself into calmness.

When she became composed enough she read the remainder of the letter. It was just such a one as Mrs. Porter, earnest, prayerful Christian as she was, might be expected to write on such an occasion. "Look to God, Hetty," she said, "for strength to bear this. Never think of Jamie as dead, but as just commencing that beautiful life of which he talked so much."

But for a moment Hetty's heart rose in rebellion. "Why is God so cruel to us?" she exclaimed passionately; then her thoughts went backward to her last parting with James, and the talk with him in the arbor. .

"If we should either of us die, wouldn't we meet again in heaven?" The question came back with mournful distinctness, and asked again for an answer. "Would she meet him again?" She had not the least doubt that James was in heaven, but would she ever go there? This question conscience asked her, and in that moment she saw clearly what a long, long distance she had wandered from the right way; she felt a sense of the wickedness of her heart-wanderings and murmurings against God; she realized the sin into which her ambition had led her.

We cannot trace Hetty's thoughts further; she pursued them with tears streaming down her cheeks; but at last they became insupportable, and she sank down again upon her knees. It was a long while before she grew calm enough to pray; the prayer began in sobs, but as it ended she became more composed.

Before Hetty went down she took her French grammar, which was lying in the window, and opening her trunk, placed it at the very bottom. "It shall lie there," she said, "till God gives me time and opportunity to study it." As she said and did this a sweet peace came into her heart. It was a feeling that had nothing joyful about it; the desolation and mourning that Jamie's death had brought was still in her heart, but the sense of God's anger against her was taken away.

It was long after dinner time before Hetty went down. She had forgotten all about the outside world and its requirements; and when at last they did come to her remembrance and she hastened down, she found the work all done.

"You ought to have called me, Ellis," she said as she looked round.

Mrs. Ellis made no reply to this remark, but glanced up at her curiously.

“She don’t look so very down about it after all,” were her mental words; but Ellis did not understand what a storm and conflict Hetty had gone through to reach the peace and calm that was written in her face.

Hetty received sympathy in her affliction. Mrs. Ellis showed hers in the way we have mentioned, the only tangible way with her. Watty expressed his in a few words, for he was very much afraid of being thought sentimental; but Hetty understood that he was sorry for her, and she was satisfied. Mrs. Manson called her up stairs and talked kindly with her; and even Dr. Manson condescended to say, (the first time he had spoken to her,)

“Remember, when you see your friends falling all around you, that your time will come soon.”

By some means Hetty’s letter had been delayed a number of days. Her mother had written for her to come home to the funeral, but that was impossible now. Hetty was nevertheless very desirous to go home.

She felt that it would be such a relief to see her mother; but Mrs. Ellis was opposed to this, and Mrs. Manson joining her objections to her housekeeper, Hetty contented herself with writing a long letter to her mother instead of visiting her.

CHAPTER XII.

STRIVING AFTER GOOD.

MORE than a week had passed since Jamie's death, and Mr. Porter in all that time had scarcely spoken to anybody. Not once had Jamie's name escaped from his lips, and the mention of it by others seemed to give him the greatest pain. Kind neighbors supplied him with work, which he seemed very anxious to get, and he worked faithfully from morning till night. He spent his evenings at home, often sitting moodily by the fire, perhaps not uttering a word the whole evening.

Still Mrs. Porter sewed on. The shadow of death had fallen heavily upon her heart, but it was brightened, nevertheless, by those rays of light which shine always for the Christian. She clung now more closely than ever to Hetty, and the hope was every day growing stronger that she should soon be able to have her home again. She watched her husband anxiously, and prayed

earnestly that the reformation might not be transient, but become a fixed and settled principle.

One evening, two weeks after Jamie's death, Mrs. Porter was sewing, with her workstand drawn closely to the stove. Mr. Porter had been bending low over the hearth, and as the red glow of the fire shone upon his face, it showed an expression of even more than usual melancholy. At last he rose, and walked the floor with a troubled, faltering step.

Mrs. Porter looked up and her eye met his. "Are you sick to-night?" she ventured to inquire.

"No," he replied, sitting down again. "I tell you what it is, Anna," he said, (for the first time for years calling her by her given name,) "I feel just like—like a murderer."

As he spoke the last word he covered his face with his hands. "O don't talk so!" said Mrs. Porter, hurriedly; "George, you are too cruel to yourself."

"I don't know what makes me think of Jimmie so much to-night," he said, taking down his hands and looking in the fire again. "O, you

needn't stare at me so, there isn't a day but what I think of him; but somehow it seems just as if he was right here to-night."

"Dear James!" said Mrs. Porter sadly, "his work was all done; he was ready to go."

"Yes indeed; tell me something about him, Anna."

Mrs. Porter hardly knew what to say; but she saw that her husband now was as eager to hear that dear name as he had before appeared to be to suppress it. She recalled many of Jamie's words and acts, many of the little missions of love that he had engaged in, and repeated them. Mr. Porter listened intently; he had been like one dead to his child while he lived, but now Jamie's death was wakening into life a new interest and love for him.

"Do you suppose he would have died if—if—well you know—if I hadn't pushed him?"

"Yes, George, I know he would. The doctor said he could not have lived long, and James seemed to realize that death was near, for he talked about it sometimes. The only thing that troubled him was you; but now you are really

different. O how happy James would be if he could—”

“Anna, do you suppose,” interrupted Mr. Porter, turning round in his chair and looking at her, “do you suppose there is any hope for me, such a wicked wretch as I am?”

“O yes!” said Mrs. Porter, her voice trembling with joy at such words from him; “I know there is, only pray. God will forgive you; he has promised to.”

“I haven’t drank a drop since that day,” said Mr. Porter slowly, as if weighing every word. “I couldn’t now if it was to save my life. I signed the pledge this afternoon.”

“Thank God!” burst forth from Mrs. Porter’s lips; “and wont you now, my dear husband, wont you turn to God and pray for help? wont we have those old happy days back again?” and Mrs. Porter rose and placed her hand on her husband’s shoulder.

“If I could! if I only could!” Then he shook her hand off lightly, and rising, commenced to walk the floor again, while Mrs. Porter sank down into his chair, and bowing her head, offered up from her heart an earnest prayer in his behalf.

A long silence came between them, then Mr. Porter drew a chair to the stove and sat down again.

"We have another child—Hester; where is she?"

Mrs. Porter was not loth to speak of Hetty; she wished to interest her husband in her, and she succeeded. She spoke of Hetty's great love for her books, and her quickness to learn, and ended by saying how much she wished to have her back again.

"She shall come," said Mr. Porter earnestly. "It's a shame, a mean shame—write to her right off and tell her to come home. Squire Lawton has given me that job of his barn, and I shall make good pay. There's a little mortgage on this place, to be sure," he added, hesitating, "but I shall soon pay that off."

Mrs. Porter was surprised at the fact of the mortgage, and at another time it would have troubled her much; but now she was so happy, thinking of the great change that had come over her husband, that she only replied cheerfully,

"And I can help you, George, and we shall

be so happy, and God will bless us if we only look to him."

It was getting very late. Mrs. Porter waited in vain for further words from Mr. Porter; then she rose, and drawing the stand toward him, placed the large family Bible upon it.

"Shall we have family prayers now, as we used to?" she said softly.

Mr. Porter, with a sudden start, leaned back in his chair, and commenced turning the leaves rapidly. At last he tried to read, but his voice trembled, and the words seemed to choke him.

"I can't, Anna," he said, pushing the book toward her; "you read to-night; I will after this, God help me!"

Mrs. Porter's voice trembled too, but it was with joy. A song of thanksgiving went up from her heart while she was reading one of David's beautiful psalms, then they knelt; and once again, after all his wanderings, Mr. Porter came back to the right way, the way which can be entered only by prayer and faith in God.

It was very late that night before the little cottage was still; but for years, perhaps, its humble walls had not held within them a

happier heart than Mrs. Porter's. Her husband turning to God—Hetty coming home—it was too much joy!

The next morning, as Mr. Porter stood with his hand on the door-knob ready to go to his work, he turned toward his wife and said, after a momentary hesitation,

“You had better write this morning; tell her to come right off.”

Mrs. Porter willingly consented. She hurried through her work, then hastened up stairs to comply. It was Hetty's room, looking just as it did when she left it; there, in one corner, was the great chest that shut in her treasured books. “Poor child,” said Mrs. Porter, as she gathered paper, pen, and ink together, “she has waited patiently a long while, how glad she will be to get this; but what a coming home it will be not to see Jamie!”

Mrs. Porter wrote only a few lines; it took few words to hold the joyful message. “I will just run down to the post-office now,” she said as she sealed it; “perhaps it will go out to-day.”

She had just reached the front door, when a sight met her eyes that made her motionless.

Coming up the walk was a crowd of men bearing among them a burden. It was Mr. Porter ; his face was deadly pale, his eyes were rolled up and fixed.

Mrs. Porter did not faint ; she was not the woman to lose her senses at the time they were most needed. She rushed for the restoratives, which, on a similar occasion, she had applied to James ; but as she held them out with a trembling hand to the doctor, who had just come in, he shook his head. "No use," he whispered, "he is dying."

Once only Mr. Porter's eyes wandered from their fixedness, and something like a smile played over his lips as he saw his wife bending over him. He made an effort to raise his hand ; Mrs. Porter clasped it in hers ; then in a few moments, without a struggle, with scarcely a visible sign, his soul passed away.

Mr. Porter had climbed very high to a part of his work. A misstep had hurled him down with such force upon the heavy timbers lying around that it broke a blood-vessel, and, as we have seen, he very soon expired.

The neighbors said that this was a judgment

against Mr. Porter; that, as he had been the cause of his child's death, so had God visited upon him a similar death; but let us not judge; we will leave all with God who judgeth righteously.

Just as Mrs. Porter had begun to taste was her cup of happiness dashed from her hand! It was a sad trial to her. She forgot all the long years of Mr. Porter's dissolute life, and thought of him only as the kind husband he once had been and had just commenced to be again.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOME AGAIN.

THERE came another letter to Hetty containing news of death. She wept when she read it, but we cannot blame her if it was less bitterly than at the news of Jamie's death. This time she went home to the funeral; she was clasped in her mother's arms, and then went softly, half fearfully, into the room where her father lay. A shudder came over her as she thought of her parting with him on that well-remembered morning; the memory was bitter, and she could not look calmly upon the white, passionless face.

Hetty went to the graveyard where they had lain her father and James. The cold winds, forerunners of winter, blew chilly around her, but she heeded them not; she sat down by Jamie's grave to think. "Where is he now?" might it not be possible that he was even that moment looking down upon her? and she looked

up at the white clouds suddenly, half thinking to see that loved face, with its sweet smile, gazing down through them. The question of that morning, remembered now with pleasure as she thought of her brother, with painful sadness as she glanced at her father's grave near her, came back and required yet again an answer; this time the one her heart gave was not like that given before. "Yes, she would meet him in heaven;" she felt an assurance that Jamie's Saviour was her Saviour, then why need she fear or doubt?

Hetty thanked God earnestly before she left the graveyard, that, though she had not now, yet she once had a brother like James. She did not realize fully, perhaps, what a blessing he had been to her, what an influence for good his life had had over her; yet she felt it in a vague way, and thanked God that she had had such a brother.

Hetty was not to remain at home. Mrs. Porter found that her house, as her husband had said, was mortgaged, not very heavily it is true, yet enough so to require a great effort on her part to remove it. She could not bear the idea of

giving up the home where she had passed the happiest and the saddest part of her life; besides, if she should, where could she go?

"I will help you all I can, mother," said Hetty; "we must keep our home."

The days passed rapidly, and the last one came of Hetty's stay. She went up stairs in the afternoon to spend a few parting moments in her room. She had just lifted the cover of the chest, and was taking out her books and looking them over, when her mother came in.

"I am very sorry, Hetty," she said, seating herself by the window.

"What for?" replied Hetty, turning with a smile.

"Why, that you can't go on with your studies; that was what you were thinking about, wasn't it?"

"No, mother; I was wondering if I could sell my books—that would help us some."

Mrs. Porter's looks showed her astonishment at this idea. "Why, you haven't given up all hopes?" she said.

"I don't know," Hetty replied, "going over

to her mother and pressing her face close to the window.

"Don't be discouraged, daughter," said Mrs. Porter, while a tone of sadness crept into her own voice.

"No, mother, I am not," said Hetty, turning quickly; "you think I am fretting about not going to school, but I was thinking what James said the last morning I saw him. He had been telling me how much he had wished that he might be cured; 'but now,' he said, 'I am perfectly satisfied as it is, for God knows best.'"

"And can you say that now, Hetty?"

"Yes, mother."

"That is right, my child; let us both remember that, in all cases, God knows best."

"But, mother, you can't imagine how wicked I have been."

Hetty drew a stool to her mother's side, and laying her head in her lap, told her the whole story of her heart wanderings and murmurings, and what had caused them; she told how wicked and miserable she had felt, and how, at last, she had been roused by the news of Jamie's death.

Before Mrs. Porter and Hetty left the room that night they bowed in prayer there, and rose from their knees much strengthened and comforted.

“If it is God’s will that you should have an education he will make an opening for you, Hetty,” said Mrs. Porter as they went down stairs together.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE.

THE winter came, and its days were passing swiftly away. Some of them were rather lonely to Hetty, but generally they went pleasantly, for she carried now a contented heart, which had a wonderful power of brightening the dark places.

The "Sunday-school" still flourished, and as the winter advanced it grew into almost a day-school as well. Maggie's love for society had been aroused, and now she seemed never quite contented unless Hetty was with her. She would watch for her hour after hour at the window, and rush out to greet her on her approach. The little girl often came down to Dr. Manson's now, for somehow her grandfather seemed to grow less strict with her; perhaps Hetty had awakened in his heart also a little love for society. Maggie would sit hour after hour in the large kitchen watching Hetty at her work,

and sometimes joining her in fragments of conversation.

When the weather became cold they were obliged to move their Sunday-school into the room where Mr. Graham stayed. At first he seemed annoyed at their presence, especially when Hetty opened her Testament to read, although she read always in a low voice, and the two girls sat as far away from him as possible. Mr. Graham was almost always reading in one of the large old books that stood on the top of the chest of drawers ; but Hetty, once or twice in looking up, caught his eye fixed upon her, and she knew he had been listening.

The Bible did not engage all the time the girls spent together, though Maggie seemed to love that book above all the rest. Watty followed his first loan of a book with many others, and they spent happy hours in looking at the engravings ; besides, Hetty had a fund of stories at her command, and many Sabbath-school songs to draw from at pleasure. The two girls were very happy together, and God was blessing Hetty's weak endeavor to do good even more than she knew.

One Sunday afternoon Hetty had been hearing a few verses that Maggie had learned ; as she finished she drew her shawl round her to go,

“Stay a little while longer,” pleaded Maggie ;
“read one more chapter, just one.”

Hetty sank back in her chair again, and opened her Testament. She read along in the chapter to which she had chanced to open till she came to these words, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” In a moment she thought of Mr. Graham, and somehow she felt that he was listening. Her voice trembled so that she could hardly read, and she glanced up nervously toward him ; she met his eyes fixed upon her, and the blood rushed to her face as she looked quickly down again.

“I guess you have stayed about long enough for to-day,” spoke up the old man sternly, as he pushed his chair back and walked heavily to the other side of the room.

Hetty, without a word, rose quickly to go ; while Maggie, putting her little hand out to detain her, said, the tears starting to her eyes,

“What is it? what has Hetty done, grandpa? you will let her come to see me, wont you?”

“Stop your whining!” he replied angrily; “she had better learn to be civil.”

“I didn’t mean anything, indeed I didn’t,” said Hetty quickly.

Mr. Graham only frowned a reply, and Hetty hurried out. Maggie started to follow her, but her grandfather called her back.

“What made me look up just then? what made me blush so? what made my voice tremble?” were the words that hurried themselves through Hetty’s mind as she walked home. This was the second time she had been sent away from that house, and she felt like saying, as she said before, that she would never, *never* go there again. “O how sorry I am I read that chapter!” she said to herself; “what made me turn to that? I suppose he thought I did it on purpose.”

Hetty did not know that what she called an unlucky accident was but the placing by Providence of a weapon in her hand to hurl against the stronghold of covetousness and sin in which Mr. Graham had been inclosed

for many years. He was not really angry with Hetty, he was angry with himself for having been caught listening; angry at the book which contained those words that so strangely troubled him—for Mr. Graham had heard them before, knew they were in the Bible, and more than all professed to disbelieve the contents of that book.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BONFIRE.

“WELL, for once in my life, I’m going to have a little rest,” said Ellis one morning as she came down into the kitchen, and seated herself, duster in hand, with a sigh of relief that foreshadowed the rest that was to come.

“How are you going to get it, Ellis?” said Hetty, turning toward her.

“Well, you see, Mrs. Manson has got a letter from her brother out west, and he wrote to have her meet him at a place I don’t know where, nor I don’t care; but they are going to start next Monday, and they are going to stay three weeks.”

“What, the doctor, and Watty, and all?”

“Yes, the whole tribe of them.”

“O that will be nice!” exclaimed Hetty; “then we will only have our own work to do.”

“Yes, the rooms up stairs will have to be aired and dusted once in a while; but that is

just nothing to the everlasting frizzing, and frying, and baking, and setting tables and waiting on 'em."

Ellis had given a right plan of the intentions of the Manson family. On the next Monday they started on a journey to the western part of the state. Watty came down into the kitchen on that morning to give them his "parting adieus," as he said. Hetty shook hands with him, and returned a few of his almost numberless bows, but Ellis was very stiff. She kept in remembrance the litters he had made, the mud and snow he had tracked in on her clean floors, and the thousand other ways in which he had annoyed her; and she would only say in parting that she was glad he was going, she wished he would stay forty years; whereupon Watty pretended to cry, and so, in the midst of mock tears, he left them.

The days that followed were indeed days of rest to Mrs. Ellis and Hetty. Ellis made no objections now to having Hetty spend her time mostly with Maggie; indeed, she seemed after the work was once done up in the morning to like to have her away.

The annoyance that Hetty had felt at being sent home had passed off. She could not resist Maggie's pleadings, and, as Mr. Graham never afterward showed signs of anger toward her, she in time forgot the occurrence of that Sunday.

As the winter advanced and signs of spring approached, Mr. Graham's health failed rapidly. Though he would not acknowledge he was sick, yet many days he kept the lounge from morning till night. It happened, very fortunately for him, that just at that time Hetty could be there so much; for, although Maggie eagerly did all she could, she knew but little about taking care of the sick. It was Hetty that made the nice toast and tea. It was she that shook up his bed so carefully, and did so quietly those countless little things essential in a sick room.

Mr. Graham would lie for hours with half closed eyes, listening to the talk of the two girls. He never made any objections to their reading in the Bible, though at times the words seemed to make him uneasy.

"How beautiful heaven will be, Maggie," said Hetty one day as they sat together by the

window, while Mr. Graham lay upon the lounge apparently sleeping, "and how nice it will be to meet our friends there. I think the first one that I shall see will be my brother Jamie."

"Are you such a silly goose 'as to suppose there is such a place?" said Mr. Graham, speaking up so quickly that Hetty turned with a sudden start; she had supposed him sleeping.

It was the first time that he had ever spoken to her on such a subject; but she answered quickly, the blood rushing to her face in her excitement.

"O yes, I *know* there is!"

"Well, well, I don't know it!" he replied, closing his eyes again.

He lay still for a long while, and Hetty had just tied on her bonnet to go, when he opened his eyes again and beckoned to Maggie.

"Bring me those books," he said, raising himself upon his elbow and pointing to the chest of drawers.

Maggie climbed up into a chair and reached them down, while Hetty brought them one by one and placed them by the side of the lounge.

Mr. Graham took up one and turned over a





The Bonfire.

few leaves, then he placed it back, and with a great effort lifting them all with both hands, he held them toward Hetty.

"Burn them up," he said; "throw them into the fireplace."

Hetty and Maggie looked at each other in astonishment; was he growing crazy? "Why, grandpa, burn up all those books you read in so much!" said Maggie.

"Yes, burn them up," he replied emphatically; and as Hetty walked reluctantly toward the fireplace he added, "they are infidel books. I have tried hard to be one; but it's hard now, it's hard."

Hetty hesitated no longer; she threw the heavy weight upon the blazing wood. As she did so she said impulsively, "I wish I had every infidel book in the world to burn along with them, what a splendid bonfire they would make."

All three watched the fire till the last trace of the books disappeared; then Mr. Graham sank back, wearied with the effort he had made, and with the excitement of his feelings.

"Wouldn't you like to have the minister

call?" said Hetty, half fearfully, going up to the lounge, for she felt that Mr. Graham ought to have encouragement and help in the putting away of evil from him.

But he only shook his head for a reply, and Hetty did not dare say more.

Was it the effect of the readings of the Bible, of the many texts that had been repeated out of it, of the simple explanations and the comments upon them, and the conversations relating to them, that had caused this bulwark of infidelity to totter? We do not know, nor will Hetty know until that last day which shall reveal all things: but this we *do* know, the constant reading or hearing of the Bible cannot fail of having an influence for good; and if its truths are received in simple faith they must become the greatest of blessings. Perhaps Hetty's and Maggie's conversation, breathing forth this childlike faith, had awakened something similar in his heart. We cannot tell; we know only the deeds that sprung from his feelings.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PRESENT.

"WHY, Ellis, what *is* the matter? you are putting the duster in the stove for wood."

Ellis started up at Hetty's words, and shut the stove-door quickly. She had just come down stairs, looking nervous and half frightened, and acting strangely. Hetty noticed this, and inquired anxiously, "Are you sick, Ellis?"

"You tend to your business and I will tend to mine," was the sour reply; and thus rebuffed, Hetty turned back to the work in which she was engaged without saying more. She was called from it in a moment, however, by Ellis, telling her to carry the duster up stairs and put it in its place.

Hetty did as she was commanded, secretly wondering all the time why it had been brought down stairs at all. She went up into the long hall that had such a lonely, deserted look about it now; the door of the parlor stood open, and

she thought of those beautiful pictures on its walls, and she wished greatly that she might just go in and look at them again; but she knew that, without permission, she had no right to do so, and, hurrying away from the temptation, she soon stood at the kitchen door again.

All that day Ellis continued to act strangely. She trembled at any little noise, and seemed very absent-minded. Hetty dared ask no questions, but she watched the strange motions with wonder.

Toward night Hetty went up to see Maggie. "Perhaps it will be a long time before I can come again," she said as she was about leaving for home. "Dr. Manson's folks are coming home to-morrow, and then there will be a great deal to do, you know. Ellis says we shall have to make up for lost time."

"But you must come every Sunday," pleaded Maggie.

"Yes, we will try to keep up our Sunday-school."

"What is that you are saying?" said Mr. Graham, rousing himself from his stupor and looking at the girls.

"Nothing, grandpa," replied Maggie, going up to the lounge, "only Hetty says she can't come here so much, because Mr. Manson's folks are coming home; but I tell her she must come every Sunday for our Sunday-school."

"Can't come any more? Well," he said, turning to Hetty, "you have done a good deal of work here. I am willing to pay you—"

"O no," she said, interrupting him. "If I have done you any good you are perfectly welcome to it."

He lay still for a moment without speaking, then he pointed to Maggie. "Do you want her to go to Sunday-school with you?"

"O grandpa! may I?" said Maggie, joyfully.

"Yes, as soon as it gets warm weather you may go, and you shall have some new clothes to wear."

"O how good, how kind you are!" Hetty could not refrain from saying in her great joy; but Mr. Graham paid no attention to her praise; he closed his eyes again, and Hetty went out, followed by Maggie.

The joy that shone in Maggie's face made her

almost beautiful, notwithstanding her sharp features and the bunch on her back.

“O how nice it will be to go to Sunday-school!” she exclaimed; “aint grandpa real good now?”

Hetty readily assented, kissing the bright, glowing face; then she hastened home, for it was already growing dark. A new surprise met her there. The Manson family had returned a day sooner than they intended, and the house was once again all stir and bustle.

Hetty was glad to see them all. It was a real pleasure now to go up stairs to lay and wait upon the table, and to hear again the lively chat around it. She appreciated the few kindly words that Mrs. Manson gave her in greeting her, for it was very seldom that the lady noticed her by word or look. She appreciated still more the little bow the doctor made her, for it was still more seldom that he paid any attention to her presence.

Watty's recognition of the little servant girl was more substantial than his father's and mother's had been. He came down in the evening with a book which he had brought as a present

for her. He presented it in that easy, careless way peculiar to him, and Hetty hardly knew how to thank him as she wished, he ignored so persistently all her attempts. The book contained the portraits of distinguished women, many of whom had risen from obscurity and poverty to high positions in the world, with a short sketch of the lives of each. As Hetty saw the contents of her book she felt the delicate compliment that Watty had given her in choosing it, and thanked him again in her heart.

When Hetty lay her head down upon the pillow that night, and ran over the events of the day in her mind, she felt that it deserved a white mark for its record. Maggie going to Sunday-school, Doctor and Mrs. Manson so kind, and then that beautiful, *beautiful* book; so, in the midst of pleasant thoughts, she fell asleep.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ACCUSATION.

"MRS. MANSON wants to see you in the parlor," said Ellis, coming down stairs the next morning.

"Wants to see me! what for?" exclaimed Hetty, with surprise in her voice.

"Go and see," said Ellis, leaving the room as she spoke, and shutting the door very energetically behind her.

Mrs. Manson was standing by the marble mantle with the fragments of a beautiful vase in her hands.

"Can you tell me," she said sternly as Hetty entered, "how this came broken?"

Hetty had an unfortunate habit of coloring at any little excitement or unforeseen occurrence. The blood rushed now to her face, and as Mrs. Manson continued to look closely and sternly at her it extended over her forehead, and she felt her whole face burning painfully.

"No, ma'am, I cannot," she answered at last, looking Mrs. Manson full in the face.

"I am sorry to hear you say that," said the lady coldly; "your face speaks the truth better than your tongue, I am afraid."

"But, Mrs. Manson, I do not know who broke it. I have not been in the room since you have been gone."

"Don't say that again," she said sternly. "The vase was a valuable one, and I am sorry to lose it; but I do not care so much about that as I do to hear you tell such dreadful falsehoods."

"I did not do it," persisted Hetty, hiding her face in her apron, trying vainly to keep back the sobs.

"It makes me shudder to hear you repeat that. Don't you know that God is listening to all this that you are saying?"

Hetty did not reply; she could not command her voice.

"What would your poor mother think to hear this? For her sake I will give you a chance to take it back. Go away now. To-morrow morning come to me in my room, and if you do not confess that you broke the vase, then you must

go home. I cannot tolerate a girl that tells lies in my house."

Hetty turned sobbing away. She knew that she was innocent, and to be accused, to be talked to in this way, it was *horrible*.

She sank down into a chair as she entered the kitchen, and her partly suppressed grief burst forth in great sobs that shook her whole frame.

"Don't, don't," said Ellis in a husky voice. "It'll all pass over; it's no killing matter after all."

"But I didn't do it," said Hetty stoutly; "and Mrs. Manson is going to send me away unless I say I did."

"O she wont! that's only a scare," said Ellis, trying to speak lightly.

All the rest of the day Ellis avoided Hetty as much as possible. She was evidently troubled, and uneasy about something. Hetty was too much occupied with herself to notice this, nor did she stop to think who broke the vase; she only knew she did not do it.

It was well for Hetty that Ellis did not call upon her, for she felt as if she could not work. She spent the afternoon in her room, and a

most miserable afternoon it was. A lie had always seemed such a wicked thing ; and now to be accused of telling one was so humiliating, so dreadful ; how her mother would feel to have her come home in this disgrace ; but just here was a consolation—her mother would believe her story, she would know that she was innocent, but she would go home only to be a burden. Then how meanly Mrs. Manson, and the doctor, and Watty too would think of her, and Watty had given her that beautiful book ; but she couldn't keep that now, she *wouldn't* while he considered her a liar ; and there came a fresh burst of tears with the last word. She took the book and went down stairs, hoping that he would come into the kitchen that she might return it. Watty did not come in, and Hetty sat before the fireplace with her swollen and aching eyes hid in her hands, while Ellis went back and forth in the kitchen casting furtive glances at the unhappy child, but never once speaking a word.

In the evening Maggie came down, and for once Hetty was not glad to see her. Her grandfather, she said, was better to-night, and he had given

her permission to come down and stay an hour.

Hetty did not wish to trouble Maggie with her trouble, so she told her nothing of it; and evaded, as much as possible, the questionings that her swollen eyes brought up.

"I have stayed 'most an hour," Maggie said, after they had talked a while; "but can't you read a little before I go?"

Hetty took out her little pocket Testament and opened it; well, perhaps, would it have been for her if, in her trouble, she had opened it before. She turned with a sudden impulse to the fifth chapter of Acts. She had often read the solemn account before, but never had it been so impressed upon her mind. Those two successive deaths never had seemed so real before. If she had looked at Ellis, as she explained the story to Maggie, she would have seen her wince and tremble under the words.

When Hetty came in from accompanying Maggie part way home Ellis sat with her head bowed on the table. She looked up immediately with a half-frightened expression.

"Do you suppose that is true you read to-night?" she said.

"Of course," replied Hetty, looking at her, a suspicion flashing into her mind.

"But God don't kill folks that way now!"

"Perhaps not; but it shows how much he hates a lie, and how truly he will punish it some time."

Ellis said no more, but hid her face again on the table. Hetty thought of the morning that Ellis had come down looking so frightened and acting so strangely, and with the thought came a strong belief that she had broken the vase. She tried to gather courage to ask her about it, but her voice failed her; she dared not do it. Then she went slowly up stairs to her own room, but not to rest; the trouble on her heart was too heavy to lose in a quiet sleep.

Hetty packed her things together the next morning. She had made up her mind to go without seeing Mrs. Manson again, for she was not willing to confess what she had not done; but the lady sent a message by Ellis for her, and she obeyed.

"If you would only just say you did—per-

haps—you know,” faltered Ellis, catching hold of Hetty as she stood in the door.

Hetty pulled herself away ; she would not listen to what Ellis was trying to say, but rushed up stairs, anxious to have the dreadful interview ended.

Dr. Manson was sitting in his wife’s room. When Hetty entered he put down his paper and, pushing back his spectacles, looked solemnly at her.

“I hope,” said Mrs. Manson, leaning forward in the large arm-chair, “that you have repented of your sin, and are willing to confess it now. I have made up my mind that if you do so I will pass it over and say no more about it.”

Hetty only shook her head in reply.

“And you still persist in your falsehoods. I cannot encourage such wickedness in my house—you must go.”

“But I did not break the vase,” faltered Hetty.

“I have told you not to say that again,” said Mrs. Manson in a very stern voice. “Your face yesterday showed and to-day it shows every appearance of guilt. You must have done it, for there was no one in the house but you and

Ellis, and she says that you were up stairs often. Remember, I do not send you away because you broke the vase, but because you have told falsehoods about it."

Hetty could not speak; she felt the sobs rising in her throat as she turned quickly to go.

"And all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone," said the doctor solemnly, as she reached the door.

Hetty hurried out into the hall. She met Watty on the stairs as she was going down.

"I want to give you back that book," she said, hiding her red eyes from him as he stopped his steps and his whistling and looked sharply at her.

"Whew! what's to pay now? Don't you like the book?"

"O yes, it's beautiful; but I don't want to keep it when you think—everybody thinks—I tell lies."

"I wouldn't make such a big fuss about all the vases in the world. I don't believe you broke it anyhow, 'pon my word I don't."

"Don't you now, truly?" said Hetty, eagerly taking down her hands.

"No, I don't. I wouldn't wonder if it was cats, or something. I saw a yellow cat around here this morning, and like as not she was the very one that done it. A witch in disguise, you know; they can crawl through key-holes, or cracks, or anything, and this cat did look just like a witch; she had the queerest eyes; did you hear her screech last night?"

"O you are making fun of me," said Hetty, the tears starting again; "you *do* believe I broke it."

"No I don't, honor bright, black and white. I don't as true as I live, Hetty."

Hetty did not doubt longer. "Thank you," she said earnestly; "I will keep the book, then, and thank you again for it. I am going home now; good-by."

"I'll just talk with mother about this. I think it's real mean to send you off so."

"O no! don't say a word. I wouldn't have you for anything. I *couldn't* stay now anyways."

"Well, good-by, then," he said, starting along, and commencing the tune that meeting her had interrupted; but he turned again and called out, "I am going to Uncle Lawton's before

long, and perhaps I will run over and see you."

Hetty only bowed in reply, and hastened on. There was one who believed her innocent, and the knowledge of this made a very wide streak of light in the dark cloud that was over her.

Ellis was sitting crouched over the fireplace. Hetty went up to the hearth, and, looking into the fire, repeated softly to herself the words that just then came to her mind, the words that Dr. Manson had flung at her: "All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone."

Ellis rose from her chair trembling all over, and seized Hetty's hand.

"I say it's too bad; you shant go, I say you shant—" she stopped suddenly, and sank down in her chair again.

The conviction had been growing stronger in Hetty's mind that Ellis was the guilty one. "How mean it is," she thought, as she stood looking at her, "to lay it on me." She was trying to gather courage to ask her a direct question concerning it, when Watty burst in at the kitchen door.

"I say it's smart," he said, "to make you walk down to the depot just like some old—well, I don't know what; but I am just going to harness up the pony and take you down, so when you are ready let me know."

"O no. I can walk just as well as not. I wouldn't have you do it for anything; your mother wouldn't like it."

"I guess the pony is mine. Uncle Lawton gave it to me, and I'll risk its hurting the carriage. If I'm a mind to take a ride this morning and go down past the depot, I wonder if its anybody's business."

Hetty had just begun to expostulate further, when she was saved the trouble by the sound of a little, weak step, which she knew to be Maggie's, at the door, and she hastened to open it, with a feeling of thankfulness that she was going to see her once more before she left.

"Grandpa wants you should come up, Hetty. He is sicker to-day—can't you come? Do come, Hetty," said Maggie in a quick, excited way the moment she entered.

Hetty hardly knew what to do; she wanted to go with Maggie very much, but if she

did she would miss the cars. A little more pleading from the little girl, and a suggestion by Watty that she could just as well go home to-morrow as to-day decided her, and she hastened up stairs after her bonnet and shawl, and in a few moments was walking rapidly with Maggie to the old house in the field.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEATH OF MR. GRAHAM.

MR. GRAHAM was lying in a stupor when the girls entered. "I think he is very sick," said Hetty, bending over the lounge. "Why didn't you tell me he was so bad? and I would have hurried more."

"He wasn't so when I went away," said Maggie breathlessly; "he was talking all the time. What shall we do?"

"Can you run for some boy, for the doctor? No, you stay and I will. I can go faster."

But just then Mr. Graham looked up with a glance of recognition.

"What can I do for you?" said Hetty, bowing at the head of the lounge.

He made no reply, but kept his eyes fixed upon her. Hetty was alarmed at the strange expression on his face, and rising up softly she hurried away for assistance.

Mr. Graham's disease had rather suddenly

developed alarming symptoms. The doctor gave no hope of his recovery. "I ought to have been called before," he said; "I am afraid it's too late now."

Mr. Graham recovered his consciousness, and became able to speak in whispers; but he failed every day, and all knew that the end was near. Maggie was so frightened that she was incapable of doing anything. She would sit for hours together by the bedside gazing into her grandfather's pallid face, with tears in her eyes. Stern though he had been to her, yet the ties of nature were strong in her young heart, and she loved him dearly. Hetty now took charge of all the work; she watched and waited upon the sick man unceasingly. With her the doctor left his orders, and she was faithful in seeing them obeyed. She gave up all thoughts of going home at present. She could not leave Maggie clinging so helplessly to her, and the old man needing to have so many things done that she could do.

In health, Mr. Graham had repelled almost everybody from him; but now, as the news spread abroad that he was sick, many called in

to see him. The minister came; but, though Mr. Graham listened earnestly to all that he said, yet he would not converse with him. The only thing that showed he had any interest in religion was his insisting upon having the "Sabbath-school" daily. Hetty's voice often failed as she read the chapters and felt his eyes fixed upon her. She knew she was reading God's word to one just on the verge of eternity, and she prayed earnestly for direction to choose appropriate passages.

A few days after Hetty came to Mr. Graham's, Mrs. Manson called with some little delicacy for the sick man. She spoke kindly to Maggie, then turned and beckoned Hetty with her to the window.

"I am sorry, my child," she said, taking Hetty's hand as she stood before her, "I am sorry I accused you so wrongfully. I have found out all about that vase; it was Ellis herself that broke it."

"O I am so glad!" exclaimed Hetty joyfully; "so glad that you don't think I told that lie. I thought it was Ellis all the time, she acted so strangely. I was almost certain it was."

“Then why did you not tell me your suspicions?”

“O, I didn’t want to accuse her unless I knew without the least doubt; besides—”

“Well,” interrupted Mrs. Manson, coloring a little at the implied rebuke, though Hetty did not intend it as such, “I never saw any one suffer so much as she has about it. Her conscience troubled her so that she could not rest, and she came to me and confessed it all. It seems she went up to dust the parlor the same day we returned, and in removing the vase it slipped from her hand; and she was so afraid of being blamed that she threw suspicion upon you, instead of frankly confessing it as she ought. If she had done so I should have treated it as an unfortunate accident, and said nothing about it.”

“But you will forgive her now?” said Hetty thoughtfully.

“I have done so. She has been punished enough already; but what I wanted to say to you is this, you must come back again. I take back, of course, all those things I said to you, and I am sorry for them.”

"But I cannot leave Maggie now," said Hetty, glancing toward the bed.

"No, of course not. You are doing nicely here, Hetty, nicely. Your pay shall go on all the same, for I am glad to see you so kind to the sick; but I think you will be released from here before long," and Mrs. Manson's eyes followed Hetty's and rested upon the sick man's face. He cannot live long," she added in a whisper; "then you must come back."

"Yes, ma'am," said Hetty sadly, and Mrs. Manson turned away.

A great weight was lifted from Hetty's heart; but there was only time for little under-currents of joy, for her thoughts were engaged upon the sick man. He grew worse rapidly, and needed much care.

But there came one day when his failing energies seemed to rally. He talked considerably with neighbors who came in and requested to have a lawyer called, and spent some time with him in putting finishing touches to his will.

He seemed so bright that Maggie was almost crazy with joy, and Hetty said to the doctor

when he came in, "He is a great deal better; he will get well."

But the doctor did not share in this hope. He shook his head, and said solemnly, "It is only the last flickering of the lamp. I shouldn't wonder if he should die to-morrow."

The words sank sadly into Hetty's heart. "Was he reconciled to God? O how could they let him die so?"

She went up to the bedside when at last the three were left alone, feeling as if she must say something.

"If you would only let me call the minister," she faltered with tears in her eyes, "if you would only let him pray—"

"What a strange child you are!" said Mr. Graham, interrupting her, not angrily, but in a kind voice; "I tell you I would be ashamed to ask God to forgive me now after I have been so wicked all my days; but if you think it would do any good to pray, you may pray. I had a great deal rather hear you than the minister."

The blood rushed into Hetty's face, she felt as if she could not do that; but then a thought of her sainted brother, how often he had done

this very thing, and a thought of that old man so near, so very near death, decided her, and she sank upon her knees. At first her voice did not rise above a whisper ; but gradually, as she forgot herself, it became strong and earnest. Maggie knelt sobbing beside her, with her little hand in hers.

When Hetty rose she met Mr. Graham's eyes fixed upon her. " You are a good child," he said kindly, " but it's too late for me now," and the look of pain that Hetty had noticed before crossed his face.

" But Jesus died for all. He would forgive you now. I know he would if you would only pray."

" I haven't prayed since I was a little child. I don't know how."

" Can't you just say, ' for Jesus's sake.' "

" For Jesus's sake," he repeated in a low voice. It was a solemn sight. An old man—old in sin as well as years—being taught by the lips of a child those blessed words. He repeated them yet again, then closed his eyes wearily. For a moment he lay quite still; but he started up suddenly, and drawing Maggie to him kissed

her tearful face, then sinking back upon the pillows, he lay apparently unconscious for a long time.

Hetty turned away from the bed unsatisfied. How could she be otherwise? O, these death-bed repentances are not the things to offer up to God. How can we rob him of everything that belongs to him day after day, year after year, trusting to the few last moments of life to make it all right. It is too dangerous. God will not be mocked.

The next day, as the doctor had prophesied, Mr. Graham died. He had been lying in a stupor for a long while; suddenly he roused himself, and made a quick motion to those who surrounded his bedside, then fell back panting and gasping for breath. Maggie rushed to him and threw her arms in fright round his neck, but in a moment it was only breathless, lifeless clay that she embraced.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCLUSION.

THE house was filled to its utmost capacity at the funeral. Through all the services Maggie's quick convulsive sobbing could be heard as she sat close to the coffin, the only relative and mourner.

It was pitiful to see the little orphan's grief. No one could comfort her in any degree but Hetty, and to her she clung as if she were her only friend on earth.

The day after the funeral the will was opened, for all were anxious to know what to do with Maggie. Mr. Graham had not left as much property as many supposed he would leave; but enough was left to amply provide for Maggie all her lifetime. The last clause of the will was one that surprised many, and Hetty Porter most of all. It was a clause making over a handsome present to her; not a large one, to be sure, but enough—the thought came to her immediately—to pay off the mortgage.

As we have said, Hetty was very much surprised at Mr. Graham's remembering her in his will, she had never thought of such a thing; but others said it was no more than right, though it was strange that the old man should have thought of it.

"What a comfort she has been to that little child of his," they said, "and what a help to him too in all his sickness." All were glad for the child whom they had seen so patiently and busily at work when they had called at Mr. Graham's.

Hetty determined to go immediately home and commence her studies again. Now had God provided the way, and so made known his will concerning her, and her will and desires coincided exactly.

After the funeral Maggie went home with the guardian who had been appointed for her, and the old house was shut up and all allowed to go to ruin together.

Hetty walked down that afternoon with Watty, who came up to accompany her to his home, her home no longer, for to-morrow the cars would bear her far from it

How different was the greeting that Doctor and Mrs. Manson gave her from the parting words she had received but a short time since. Both seemed to try to make all possible amends for their unkind words and suspicions. Hetty did not take her accustomed place in the kitchen, but gathered with them round the table upon which she had so often waited. In the evening she sat with them under the big chandelier in the library, and a most happy evening it was. Doctor Manson and his wife talked very kindly to her; they commended her for her determination to get an education, and encouraged her to proceed. And Watty? yes, he had much to say also, and somehow his hearty words had more of interest in them for her, for she did not forget—never would forget, she said—that while others believed her guilty, his faith had remained unshaken.

In the morning Hetty went down stairs. She had rather dreaded to meet Ellis, and as she first entered the kitchen she seemed hardly to know what to say; but one of her quick impulses came over her as she noticed how sad

Ellis looked, and she went up to her and flung her arms round her neck.

Ellis could not resist this unexpected greeting, and the tears almost choked her as she said, "It was mean, any how."

"Don't say a word about it," said Hetty quickly. "I forgive you, and God will too if you will pray to him."

"I do pray," said Ellis, bending down and speaking in a low whisper, "I've been awful wicked. Do you suppose there is any help for me?"

"O yes, yes! I know there is. O, I'm so glad, Ellis, for you will be so happy if you are a Christian. Don't give up, but keep praying. I shall pray for you too every night and morning."

Hetty went up stairs to get her trunk in readiness, while Ellis followed on to help, telling her all the time in a broken voice how miserable that lie had made her, and how wicked, how dreadful wicked she had been, and how she was trying to find forgiveness.

At last the trunk was all ready. Hetty turned to give a last look at the little room—one last

look out at the window by which she had so often sat—sometimes in joy, sometimes in sorrow. The tears started to her eyes as she noted the old house in the field, and thought of all that had passed within it. Then she turned, and flinging her arms again around Ellis's neck, she whispered, "God will help you, I know he will; keep praying, dear Ellis, and I shall remember you always, and always pray for you."

Watty drove Hetty down to the depot. She made no objections now, for she knew his mother would have none. Mrs. Manson stood on the piazza, and spoke kindly "good-byes," while Doctor Manson made a stately bow from the hall. Hetty looked back suddenly at the moment of starting, and saw Ellis standing in the kitchen door with her apron to her eyes. With a last bow to her, and a last glance at the pleasant house, she was borne away.

We cannot follow Hetty step by step any further. She worked her way through the preparatory course, and finally graduated. She spent a few years as teacher in a ladies' seminary. Afterward, as the wife of a minister, she

spent many happy years, useful in her day and generation. She found always that God knows best, and that he would guide and lead her if she put her trust in him, even as she had found in childhood.

Before we leave Watty we must say this much further of him. He passed through boyhood without an experimental knowledge of religion; but a revival occurred at the college in which he graduated soon after he entered it, and he was one of the first to be awakened. His chosen profession was the law; but after many struggles, it is true, he gave that up, for he heard the voice of God telling him to preach his gospel, and he dare not refuse the call.

Maggie died early; but she had lived near her Saviour, and her death was very, very happy.

THE END.

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